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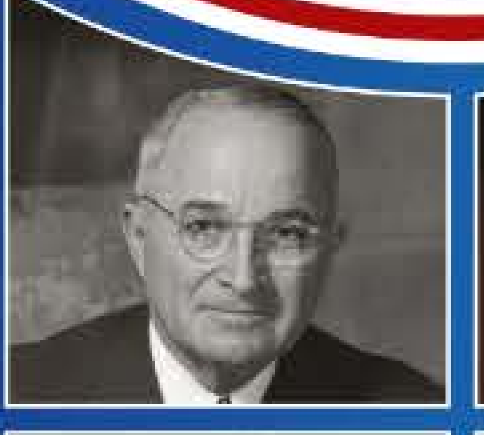
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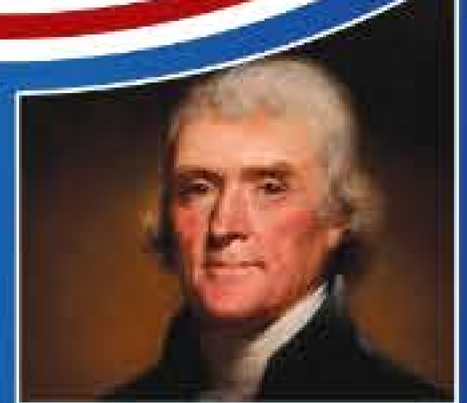
# US PRESIDENTS



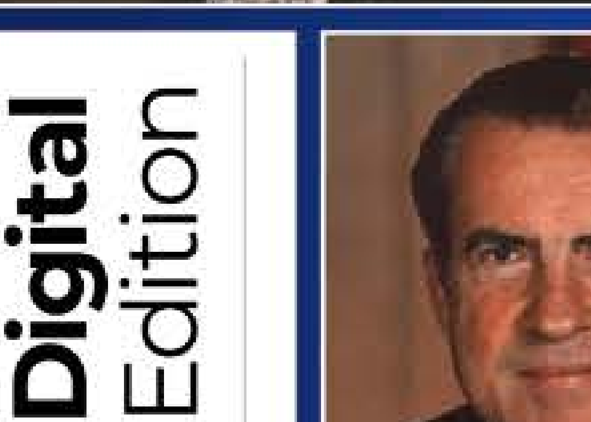
Discover the iconic leaders who shaped history

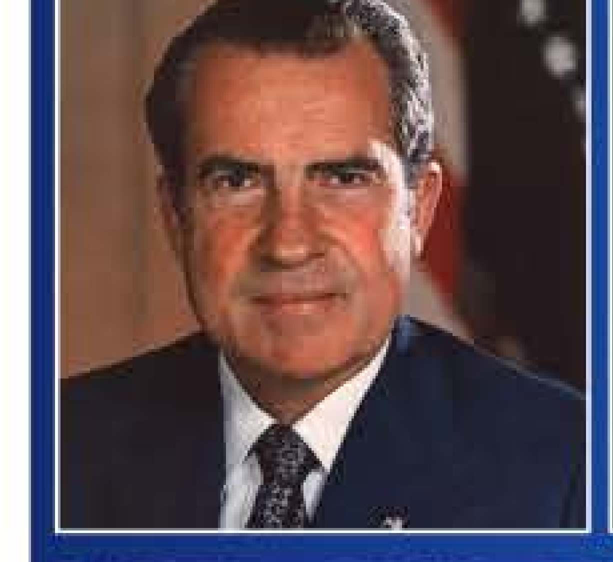


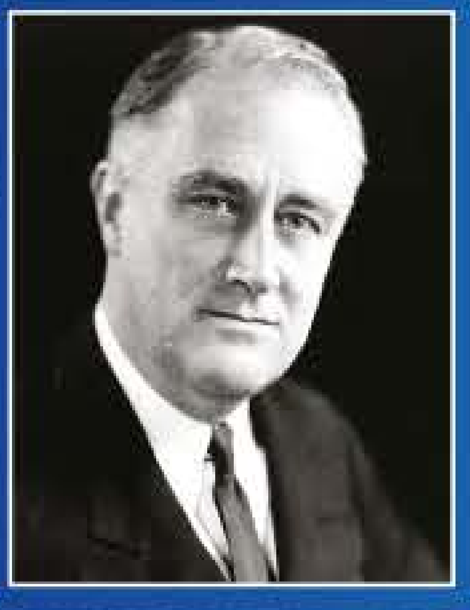


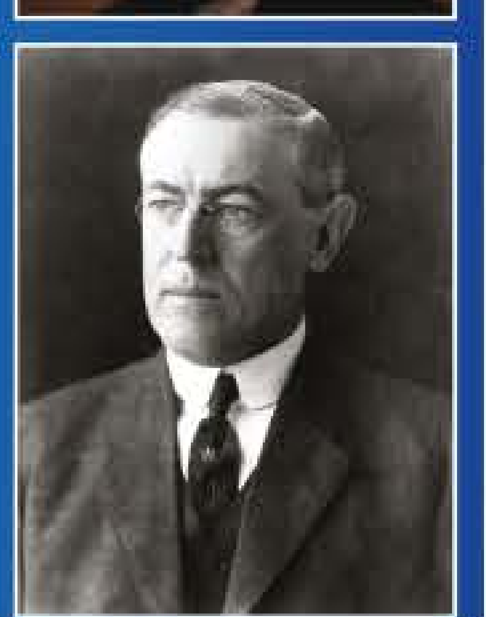














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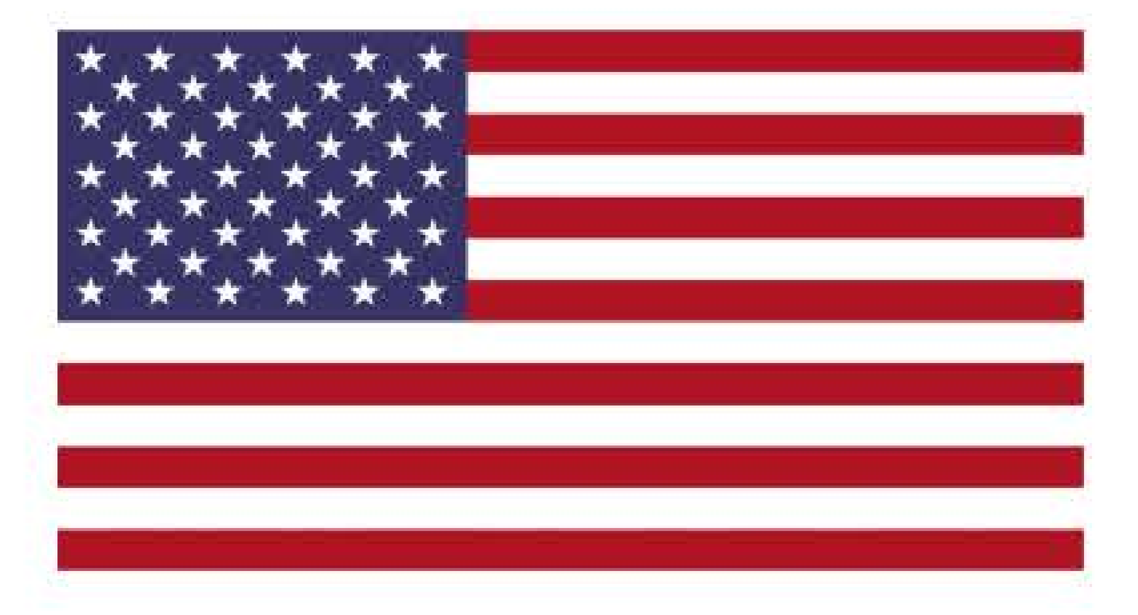
Welcome to

ALL ABOUT HISTORY

Book of

# US PRESIDENTS

In 1789 George Washington was elected as the first president of the United States and helped to usher in a new era in world history following the epochal events of the American Revolutionary War. Since then, the history of the United States, and indeed the world, has been shaped by the people who have held the nation's most powerful office. From inspirational leaders like Abraham Lincoln to flawed and controversial figures such as Richard Nixon, the White House has played host to some of the most iconic individuals in history. The All About History Book of US Presidents profiles each and every one of them. With detailed features on every president, from Washington to Trump, this book offers a compelling insight into the people that shaped the United States as we know it today. We hope you enjoy it.



ALL ABOUT HISTORY

Book of

# US PRESIDENTS

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**Printed by** William Gibbons, 26 Planetary Road, Willenhall, West Midlands, WV13 3XT

**Distributed by** Marketforce, 5 Churchill Place, Canary Wharf, London, E14 5HU
www.marketforce.co.uk Tel: 0203 787 9001

**All About History Book of US Presidents Fifth Edition**





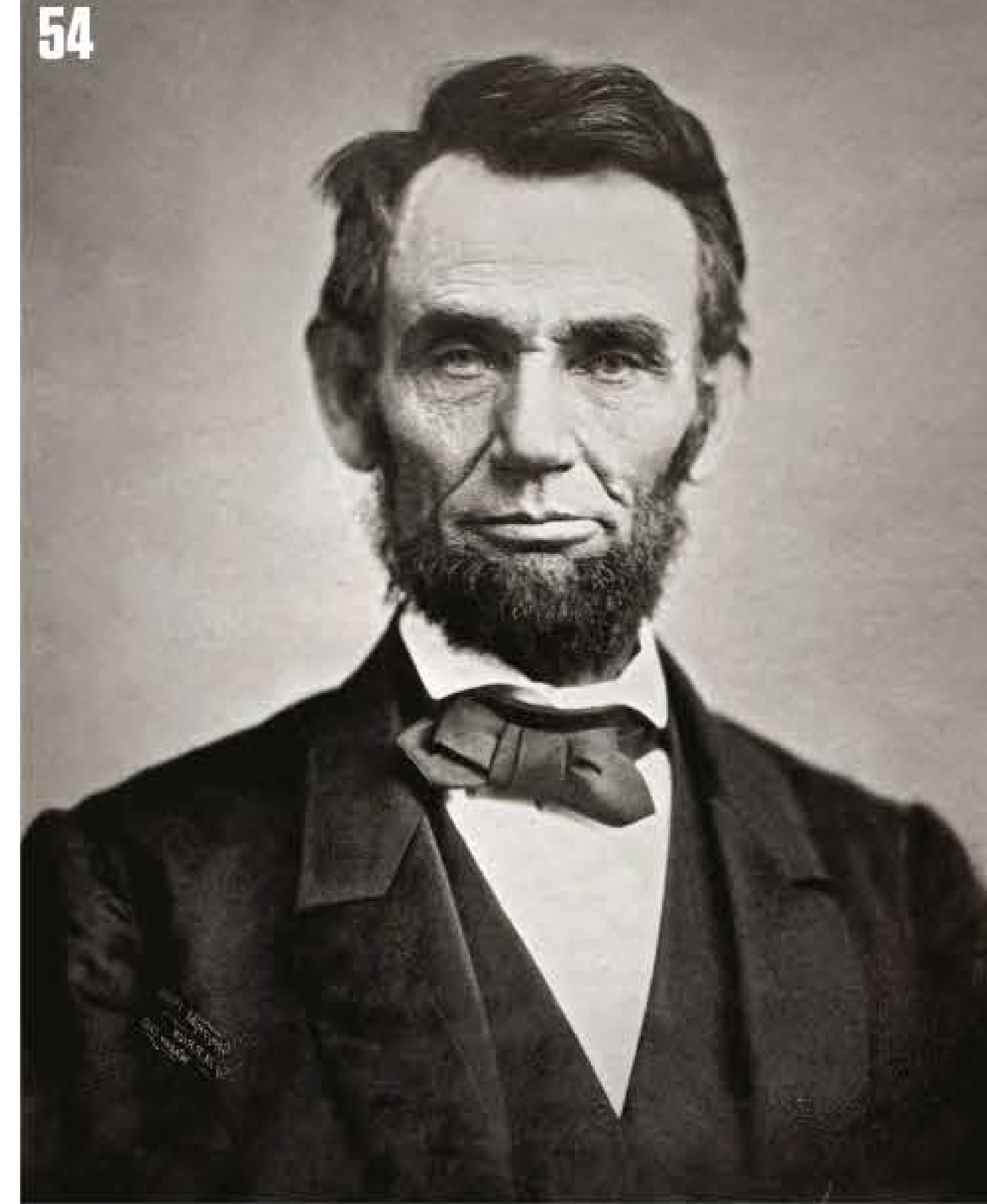






# Contents





54



126



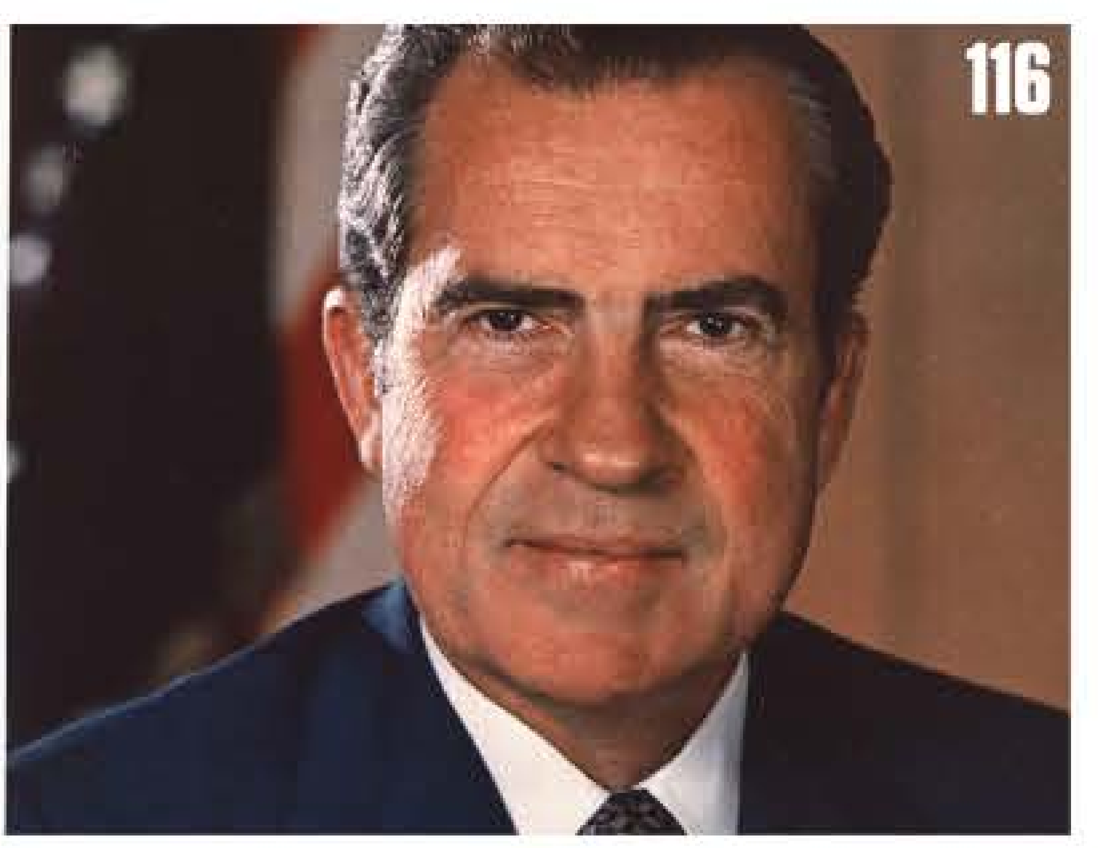
94



134




104


116


12

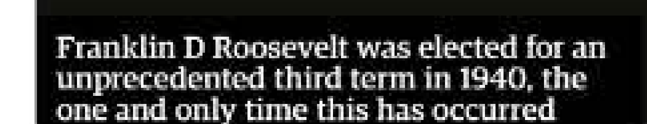

132


138


140

# The birth of the US presidency

## Discover the origins of the US presidency and how a single elected person becomes one of the most powerful leaders in the world

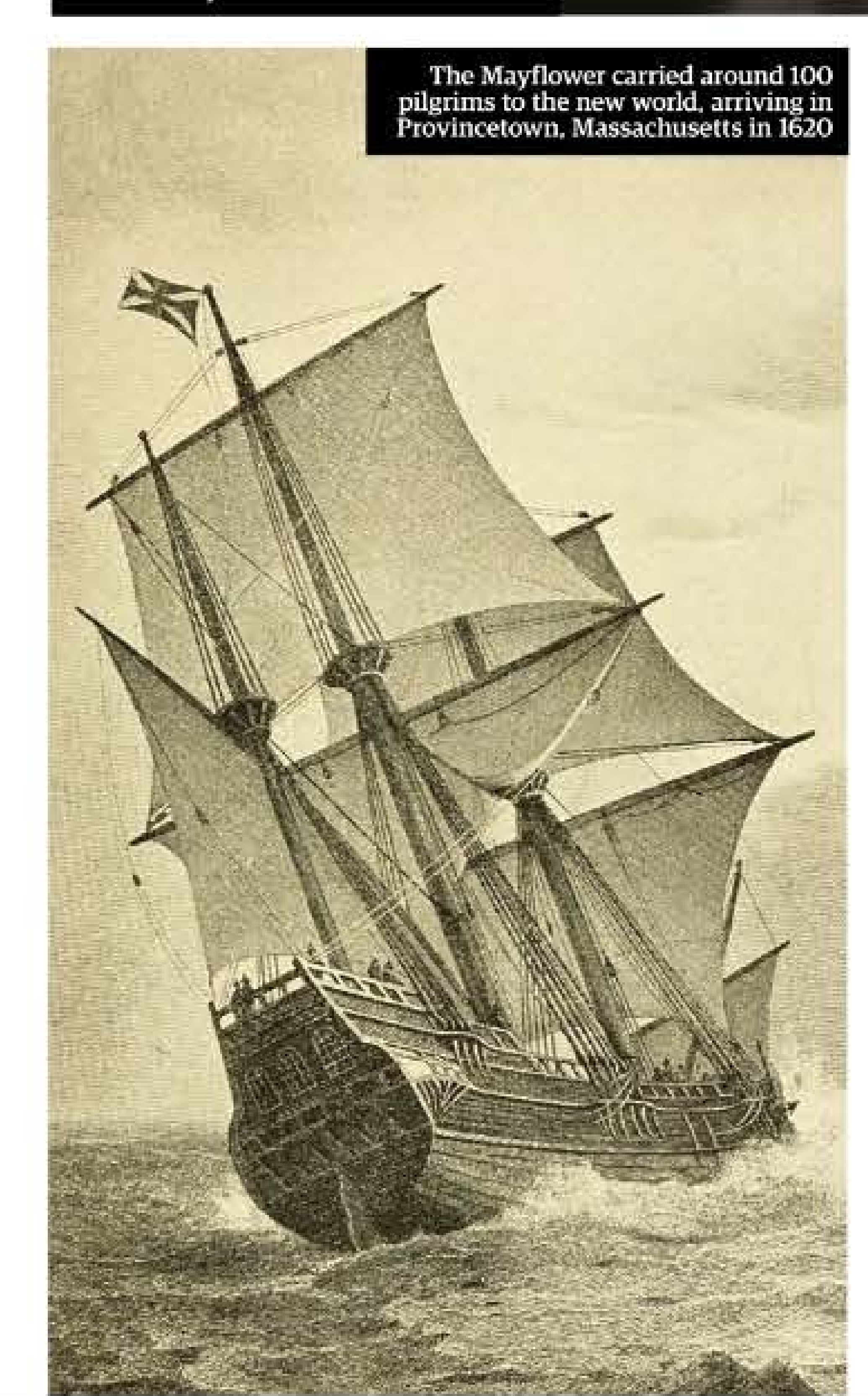

Franklin D Roosevelt was elected for an unprecedented third term in 1940, the one and only time this has occurred

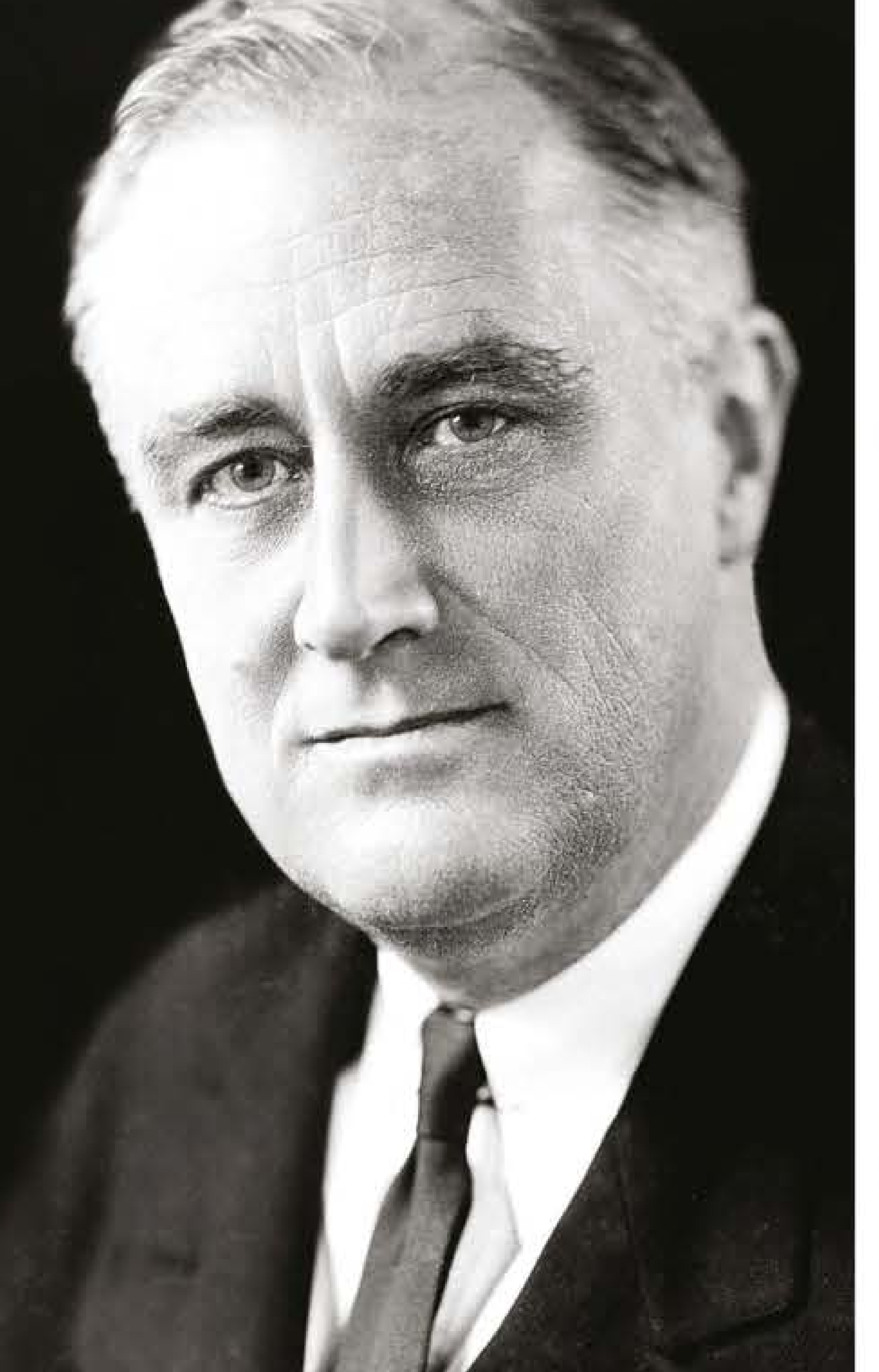
The birth of the US presidency came about back in 1776, when a group of 13 British colonies on the east coast of North America, acting through the Second Continental Congress (a convention of delegates from each of the colonies), declared political independence from Great Britain during the American Revolution. The resulting independent states acknowledged the need to coordinate their efforts in distancing themselves from the British, and its monarchy, and the Articles of Confederation (a formal agreement among the 13 newly formed states that served as its first constitution) was established to form a link between them.

However, over time it became apparent that the Articles of Confederation didn't provide enough power for a centralised government. Of course, Congress could form its own determinations and regulations, but it couldn't enforce any laws or taxes upon its citizens. In fact, Congress had so little power that state delegates often didn't bother to turn up and vote on key matters. Things came to a head in 1786 when a group of farmers in Massachusetts rebelled against paying off debts and it become apparent that Congress lacked the power to do anything about it. This resulted in many citizens recognising the need to strengthen the government and give it more power to act in such circumstances.

The result was that in 1787, the Constitutional Convention convened to strengthen the central government and, after much wrangling from all sides, the Constitution was written up to create a more perfect union between the states. With the formation of centralised governments often being settled by all-out war in other countries, the fact that that Constitution was created under a blanket of calm by all parties concerned felt somewhat unique in world history. If the delegates failed in what they were trying to achieve, however, it would send a message that a government couldn't be created with calm debate, and that such agreements would always be subject to conflict or pure chance.

To protect against giving the central government too much power, the delegates writing the Constitution added something ground-breaking: the Bill of Rights. This limited the power of the federal government in the US and protected the rights of all citizens


The Mayflower carried around 100 pilgrims to the new world, arriving in Provincetown, Massachusetts in 1620





The Articles of Confederation was drawn up to acknowledge the need for the colonies to distance themselves from British reign

Barack Obama was the 44th President of the United States; he stood down in January 2017 after two terms

# United States Congress

The president of the United States leads the executive branch of the federal government, which is legislated over by Congress

The United States Congress, over which the president presides, is the legislature of the federal government of the United States and consists of two houses: the Senate and the House of Representatives. Congress meets at the Capitol Hill building in Washington DC and the senators and representatives of both houses are chosen through election and members are usually affiliated to either the Republican Party or the Democratic Party (and very rarely to a third party).

Congress consists of 535 members (435 Representatives and 100 Senators), all of whom can vote in political matters. The House of Representatives and Senate are equal partners in the legislative process and legislation cannot be enacted without the consent of both houses - although the Constitution does grant each house some unique powers. For example, the Senate can ratify treaties and approve presidential appointments, while the House of Representatives can initiate bills for raising revenue.

Members of the House of Representatives serve two-year terms and represent the people of a single constituency, or 'district', and these districts are apportioned to states by population using United States census data. Each state has a minimum of one congressional representative and two senators - the latter being elected for six-year terms. The President of the United States has the power to convene and adjourn either of both houses of Congress under extraordinary circumstances and is responsible for dictating the legislative agenda of the party for which they are affiliated.




The United States Congress is the bicameral legislature of the federal government of the United States

by safeguarding democracy and upholding personal freedoms and rights. On 17 September 1787, the final form of the Constitution was approved at the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, then ratified the following June. It was then that George Washington (who was a delegate for Virginia at the time of the Second Continental Congress in 1775 and elected commander-in-chief of the Continental Army) was unanimously elected president. Washington was always outspoken in his views against British regulations and his was also among the loudest voices to acknowledge that the nation, under the Articles of Confederation, was not functioning very well. Widely admired for his strong leadership qualities, Washington oversaw the creation of a strong, financially astute national government and was elected for a second term, eventually retiring at the end of his second term and therein establishing a tradition that lasted until 1940, when Franklin D Roosevelt was elected for an unprecedented third term.

In 1951, the 22nd Amendment was adopted, prohibiting any president from being elected for a third term (each term lasts four years). The amendment also prohibits anyone from being elected to the presidency more than once (if they had previously served as president or acting president for more than two years of another person's term as president).

To date, 44 people have served 45 presidencies (counting Grover Cleveland's two nonconsecutive terms separately) spanning 57 full four-year terms. The current US President, Donald Trump, was elected for his first term in office in November 2016 and is currently serving the 58th term, which is due to end in January 2021 - after which he could run for a second term, or the 46th President of the United States will be sworn in.

## Seal of the President of the United States

Discover the meaning behind the design of the official seal used by the president of the United States




### The origins
It is believed that the use of presidential seals began around the 1850s. It was certainly recorded that Rutherford B Hayes was the first president to use the Seal of the President of the United States on official White House invitations in 1877. Since then it has undergone a few alterations.

### The stars
The ring of stars on the seal reflects the total number of states that comprise the USA. Two extra stars were added in 1959 and 1960 to reflect the admissions of Alaska and Hawaii as states. The shield features 13 stripes to signify the 13 original American colonies.

### The motto
Adorning the scroll in the middle of the seal are the words, 'E pluribus unum'. This is a Latin phrase meaning 'One out of many' and it alludes to the union of the states and formation of the federal government. The motto was suggested in 1776 by Pierre Eugene du Simitiere to the committee responsible for developing the seal.

### The eagle
The eagle featured on the seal is clutching an olive branch (to signify peace) in one foot and a cluster of arrows (to signify the acceptance of the need to protect the country) in the other. The olive branch features 13 olives and 13 leaves and there are 13 arrows in total, all relating to the original 13 colonies.

### Other colonial references
Look closely and you will find other references to the 13 colonies within the seal. There are 13 stars around the eagle's head beneath an arc of 13 clouds. The design is encircled by the words, 'Seal of the President of the United States'.



## Taking the oath

Following the 20th Amendment, the president's term in office begins at noon on 20 January of the year following the election. Known as Inauguration Day, this date marks the beginning of the four-year terms of both the president and the vice president. Before executing the powers of office, a president is constitutionally required to take the presidential oath, which consists of the following words: "I do solemnly swear that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States'.

## Defining moment

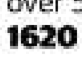
### The English invasion 1607

In 1607, Jamestown in southeast Virginia becomes the first permanent English settlement in America. The House of Burgesses, the first legislative assembly of elected representatives in America meets for the first time in Virginia. This body was created as part of an effort to encourage English craftsmen to settle in North America. Around the same time the first African slaves are brought into Jamestown.

**Plymouth Colony established**

The ship, the Mayflower, arrives at what is now Provincetown, Massachusetts from Plymouth, England carrying around 100 pilgrims bound for Virginia to establish a permanent colony in North America. Before disembarking from the ship, the male passengers, around 41 in total, had to sign the Mayflower Compact, an agreement that formed the basis of the colony's government. By 1650, colonial population is estimated at over 50,000.

**1620**





## Timeline



1500

**Discovering the New World**

Italian explorer Christopher Columbus, backed by the kingdom of Spain, embarks on the first of four separate voyages to the New World, landing in the Bahamas on 12 October 1492. In 1513, Spanish explorer Juan Ponce de Leon makes landfall on the coast of Florida, which results in the Spanish settlement of Saint Augustine becoming the very first permanent European colony in North America.

**1500s**



**The Boston Tea Party**

A group of colonial patriots disguised as Mohawk Indians board three ships in Boston Harbor and dump more than 300 crates of tea overboard as a protest against the British tea tax. This tax was just one of the Townshend Acts designed to collect revenue from the colonists in America by putting customs duties on the importing of glass, lead, paints, paper and tea.

**1773**

**The American Revolution**

A war of independence is fought between the British government and the 13 British colonies on the eastern coast of North America.
On the morning of 19 April 1775, shots are exchanged between colonial militiamen and British soldiers in the towns of Lexington and Concord and the revolution begins. This conflict would last until 1783 when the Treaty of Paris was drawn up to bring it to a close.

**1775**

Grover Cleveland served two terms as president but, unusually, not consecutively


The Pentagon in Washington DC in the Federal District of Columbia

## The powers of the president

The president of the United States is one of the world's most powerful people, who holds a dominant position in international relations with an unparalleled ability to exert influence and project power on a global scale. The role of president includes being the commander-in-chief of the United States Armed Forces (which includes the world's largest nuclear arsenal), and leading the executive branch of the federal government, as well as being in charge of the world's largest economy.

Article II of the US Constitution (which, over 200 years after it was first written up, still governs the United States), vests the executive power of the United States in its president. This power also includes the responsibility of appointing federal executive, diplomatic, regulatory and judicial officers and concluding treaties with foreign powers with the advice and consent of the Senate. The president can also grant federal pardons and reprieves and is largely responsible for dictating the legislative agenda of the party to which they are affiliated (Republican or Democratic). The president also directs the domestic and foreign policy of the United States. The duties and responsibilities of the president have increased substantially since the formation of the United States.

### *Defining moment*
### The Declaration of Independence 1776

The 13 colonies, consisting of Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Georgia, Connecticut, Massachusetts Bay, Maryland, South Carolina, New Hampshire, Virginia, New York, North Carolina and Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, declared independence from Britain and formed the United States. Though the new states were independent of one another, Congress was established to establish a link between the states. However, it lacked the authority to create laws and taxes.

**Articles of Confederation**

The need for unity among the new states created by the American Revolution and the necessity of clearly defining the powers of the Continental Congress and the individual states led Congress to entrust the drafting of a federal constitution to a committee. The resulting document, the Articles of Confederation, submitted by the committee, provoked much argument over tax and land issues and was subsequently revised before being adopted by Congress.

**1777**

**Treaty of Paris**

Signed in Paris by representatives of King George III of Great Britain and the United States of America, the Treaty officially ended the American Revolutionary War and secured independence for each of the 13 former British colonies. With peace established, the states began to concentrate on internal affairs.

**1783**

**Shays' Rebellion erupts**

A group of farmers from New Hampshire to South Carolina take up arms to protest against the high state taxes and the subsequent stiff penalties enforced for non-payment. Congress lacked the power to do much about it, which resulted in a lot of people arguing for the need to strengthen the government and give it more power to act in such circumstances.

**1786-1787**

### *Defining moment*
### The forming of the US Constitution 1787

The Constitutional Convention, made up of delegates from 12 of the original 13 colonies (the Rhode Island representative failed to attend), meets in Philadelphia to draft up what will become the US Constitution. The session was presided over by George Washington. The draft, which was originally a preamble and seven articles, was submitted to all 13 states and came into effect when ratified by nine of them.





1791

### *Defining moment*
### George Washington elected 1789

George Washington is unanimously elected first President of the United States in a vote by state electors. The US Constitution goes into effect and meets for the first time at Federal Hall in New York City. Washington is officially inaugurated as President on 30 April. In 1791, the first ten amendments to the Constitution, known as the Bill of Rights, are ratified.

## 1789 – 1797

# George Washington

### An instrumental figure in world history, Washington was the United States' first and arguably greatest president

Long Island was supposed to be a success. The enemy was stronger and greater in number but the rebels had got there first. The commander had prepared everything for his foe's arrival in New York, strengthening his batteries and placing his generals perfectly. But the British had broken through. First Sullivan fell, then Stirling, and the commander could only watch as the lives of his brave men were brutally wiped away. Knowing all was lost he ordered his men to retreat before the carnage could reach them. As relentless rain pelted down he used the cover of darkness to help conceal his soldiers as they climbed into every available boat he could get his hands on. He waited until the last man was on board before he boarded himself. As the boat drew away the commander looked back through the thick fog that had descended over the bay. The mist had concealed them from the British, his men were safe, but Brooklyn had been lost.

This is not the story of a failed general, forgotten by the history books, but instead that of the most glorified and worshipped president in US history - George Washington. Just as his men were hidden by the fog that grim morning in Brooklyn, today Washington himself is cloaked and obscured by layers of myths and legends. He has become an almost messianic figure in the United States, a legend of justice and freedom, a brilliant commander who led his underdog army to the greatest victory in US history. But as with most legends, the stories are not always true. Far from being a brilliant military strategist, Washington actually lost more battles than he won. He was no Alexander or Caesar, but an entirely different kind of hero altogether - one who persevered in the face of devastating failure for his men and country.

Born on 22 February 1732, George Washington was the son of a slave-owning tobacco planter. George received a mixed education from a variety of tutors, and plans for him to join the British Royal Navy were cut short when his mother objected.

> In his final will, Washington freed all of his slaves

Fate instead led Washington to become a surveyor, and he travelled for two years surveying land in the Culpeper, Frederick and Augusta counties. This position began a lifelong interest in landholdings, and he purchased his first piece of land as soon as his sizable income filled his pockets. And when his older brother died in 1752, Washington inherited not only his father's vast lands, but also the position of major in the Virginia militia.

It would not be long until Washington's natural leadership and drive would send him straight into the heat of battle. At a staggering 188 centimetres (6'2") tall, the young man towered above his contemporaries, and Virginia's Lieutenant General Robert Dinwiddie saw fit to use his imposing but inspiring nature to try to persuade the French to remove themselves from land claimed by Britain. When they refused, Washington returned with a small force and attacked the French post at Fort Duquesne, killing the commander and nine men and taking the others as prisoners, all in 15 minutes. The event had huge international



**1**

**GEORGE WASHINGTON**
**Non-partisan, 1732 - 1799**

**Brief Bio**

Hailed by many as the greatest US president of all time, George Washington served as commander-in-chief of the US Continental Army during the American Revolution. He then went on to become the first US president, serving from 1789 to 1797. Today Washington remains an icon of liberty and freedom, and is one of the most recognisable faces in the world.



The Boston Tea Party was a response to the Tea Act enforced by the British government, and resulted in the passing of the Intolerable Acts, which in turn helped to spark the American Revolution

## Making History

### Three reasons Washington is the USA's greatest leader

**1 Virtue**

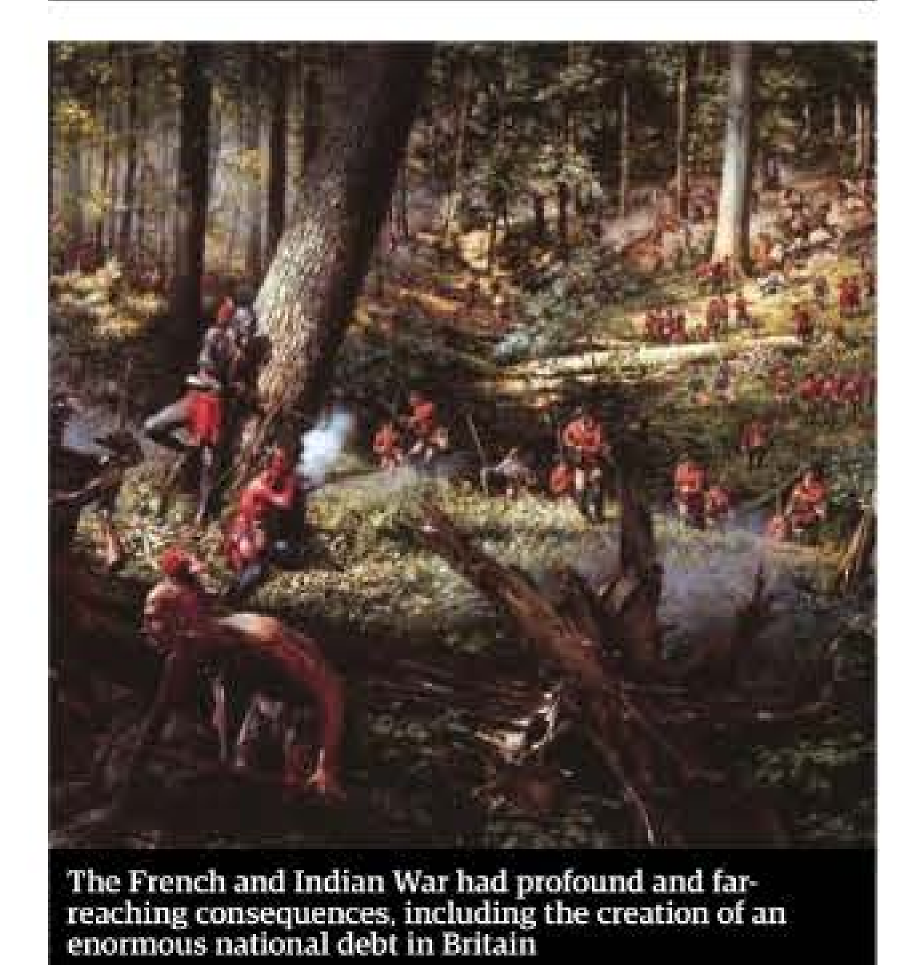
Washington twice gave up the chance of ultimate power. First at the end of the Revolutionary War when he surrendered his role as commander in chief, and again when he refused to rule as president for a third term. When George III was presented with the idea of Washington doing this, he said, "If he does that he will be the greatest man in the world."

**2 Commitment to country**

Washington did not become involved in the hostile arguments and squabbling of political debates, but instead acted as a peacekeeper between the groups. A true non-partisan, his primary aim was always the betterment of the country, rather than any personal gain.

**3 Persistence**

Washington was not the most gifted military leader; he suffered multiple losses and personal humiliations, but his determination to persevere in spite of repeated setbacks inspired his soldiers to do the same, which resulted in him creating one of the most celebrated underdog success stories in world history.



The French and Indian War had profound and far-reaching consequences, including the creation of an enormous national debt in Britain

implications, and Great Britain and France began to pump forces into North America - The French and Indian War had begun. In a matter of minutes the name Washington became synonymous with three things - bravery, daring and recklessness.

Washington was rewarded for his quick thinking by being appointed commander in chief and colonel of the Virginia Regiment, the first full-time American military unit. With command of a thousand soldiers, Washington was tasked with defending Virginia's frontier, and he demonstrated his resolve and forthright approach as his unit engaged in 20 battles over 12 months. But his reckless attitude and inexperience was demonstrated when his unit exchanged friendly fire with another British force, killing 14 men.

His time commanding an army had taught Washington many things - how to bring the best out of his men, the importance of stamina and bravery, as well as discipline and training. It had also given him valuable insight into the British military tactics, and his struggles in dealing with government officials convinced him that a national government was the only way forward. However, when Washington retired from service in 1758, as far as he was concerned his time on the battlefield was over.

In 1759 Washington married the intelligent and wealthy Martha Dandridge Custis and together with her two children they moved to the plantation of Mount Vernon. Enjoying the newly inherited wealth from his marriage, Washington was now one of Virginia's wealthiest men and he concentrated on expanding and making the most out of his plantation. Little did he know that revolution was bubbling, and soon he would find himself back on the battlefield in what would become the most famous war in American history.

> Washington was very fond of dogs and gave them unusual names such as Tarter, True Love and Sweet Lips

Washington wasn't the most likely of revolutionary leaders; although he opposed the controversial Stamp Act of 1765, during the early stirrings of revolution he was actually opposed to the colonies declaring independence. It wasn't until the passing of the Townshend acts of 1767 that he took an active role in the resistance. In an act of rebellion he encouraged the people of Virginia to boycott English goods until the acts were repealed. However, when the Intolerable acts were passed in 1774, Washington decided that more forthright action needed to be taken.

Passionate and charismatic, Washington was an obvious choice to attend the First Continental Congress. Although the delegates appealed to the crown to revoke the intolerable acts, they didn't even make a dink in the steely British armour, and a Second Continental Congress was called the following year.

A lot had changed in a year, and Washington too had undergone something of a transformation. The battles at Lexington and Concord had shown the colonies that they were capable of taking on the might of the British, and when Washington arrived in Pennsylvania for the state meeting dressed head to toe in military gear, it sent a strong message: he was prepared for war. So was Congress. It formed the Continental Army on 14 June 1775 and it

## Timeline

1754

**French and Indian War**

The French and Indian War was part of a much longer conflict between Great Britain and France, known as the Seven Years War. The war was fought in the north of North America between the colonies of the two powers, ending with France losing its territory in North America. However, funding the war created a huge national debt in Britain and gave France a good reason to support American independence.
**1754-1763**

**Stamp Act**

The resulting national debt of the Seven Years War in Britain had reached £130 million by 1764. Britain also needed a way to pay for its army in North America and decided the colonies should subsidise it. The Stamp Act forced citizens to pay taxes on documents and paper goods and was immediately unpopular as it was carried out without any consent. The outrage soon turned violent and the tax was never collected.
**1765**

**Townshend Acts**

The Townshend Acts were a series of acts passed by the British Parliament upon the colonies in North America. These acts placed duties on vital, high-volume imported items such as glass, paints, paper and tea. The money raised was intended to pay to keep governors and judges loyal, and to set a general precedent that the British had the right to tax the colonies.
**1767-1770**

**Boston Massacre**

This incident occurred when a heckling crowd gathered around a British guard, who was joined by eight more soldiers. The soldiers fired at the crowd, killing three and wounding others. Two more later died of their wounds. The soldiers were arrested for manslaughter but released without charge, which helped foster the anti-British sentiment in the colonies.
**1770**



Washington's ability to evacuate his army from Long Island without any loss of life or supplies stunned the British

He was granted honorary French citizenship by the National Assembly of France

George Washington fought with the British in the assault on the French-held Fort Duquesne

An illustration of Washington's home in Mount Vernon

**Boston Tea Party**
In an effort to force the colonies to accept the Townshend duty on Tea, Britain passed the Tea Act, allowing the East India Company to ship its tea to North America. In defiance, protestors boarded the ships and threw chests full of tea into Boston Harbour. Parliament responded harshly, by passing the Intolerable Acts, which took away the rights of the state of Massachusetts to govern itself.
**1773**

**First Continental Congress**
Delegates from 12 of the 13 British colonies in America met at Carpenters' Hall in Philadelphia to discuss ways to halt the Intolerable Acts. They made plans to refuse to import British goods until their grievances were met. When these efforts proved unsuccessful, a Second Continental Congress was held the next year to prepare the country for the impending American Revolutionary War.
**1774**

**The Battles of Lexington and Concord**
When American intelligence learned that British troops planned to march on Concord, they were quick to assemble their forces and take up arms against them. However only 77 militiamen faced 700 British at Lexington and were quickly defeated. The British continued to Concord to search for arms, but they were forced back by 500 militiamen, winning the colonies their first war victory.
**1775**

1775

**The Battle of Bunker Hill**
Set during the Siege of Boston, this battle saw the British mount an attack against the colonial troops stationed in Bunker Hill and Breed's Hill. Although the British were victorious, the heavy losses suffered by the redcoats led it to be a hollow victory, and it proved the Americans could hold their own against their foes in battle. Shortly after the conflict, King George III officially declared the colonies to be in a state of rebellion.
**1775**

## Valley Forge

### Pennsylvania, 28 January 1777

The cold today was worse than it has ever been. The crowded wooden huts provide shelter from the biting wind, but the cold passes between the slats, through my threadbare shirt and nestles in my bones. My quest to procure a set of shoes continues to be unsuccessful. I thought that after marching through the snow in bare feet someone would take pity on me - but there are no supplies coming. The food too is running low. For the past week I have only eaten firecake - a sticky, bland abomination of water and flour that fills my stomach but leaves the soul ravenous.

I shouldn't complain - I am one of the lucky few untouched by the diseases that ravage the camp. So many men have been plagued by itchy rashes and blisters or fevers that refuse to calm. The only relief here are the brave few women who wash and mend our uniforms, or sometimes simply provide a shoulder to men who have no will to go on.

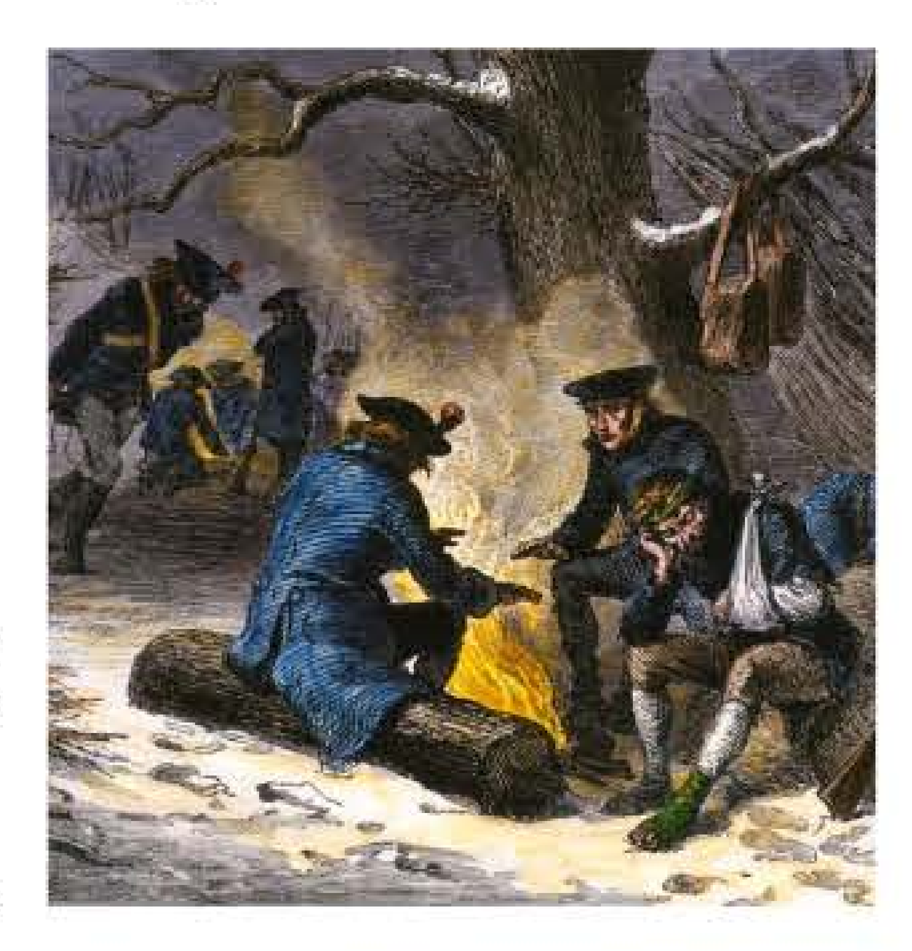
needed a leader. Reluctant and somewhat modest, Washington did not see himself as a leader capable of leading such a vitally important force, but for those around him there was no other choice. With proven military experience, a devoted patriot and a strong, commanding presence, Washington was appointed commander in chief of the force that would take on the mightiest nation on Earth.

It did not take long for the new commander to prove his worth. In early-March 1776, Washington turned the Siege of Boston around by placing artillery on Dorchester Heights, low hills with a good view of Boston and its harbour. The perfectly placed, powerful cannons forced the British to retreat from the city, and the American commander moved his army into New York City. Even the critical British papers couldn't deny the skills of the captivating and exciting new leader who seemed capable of repelling their great empire with ease.

Victory and gossip aside, in truth Washington was out of his depth. He had commanded men before, but only a force of a thousand soldiers - far from the tens of thousands at his disposal now. He had only fought in frontier warfare, far removed from the open-field battles he now faced. He had never commanded legions of cavalry or artillery - he was constantly learning on the job. Washington had to rely on his own intelligence and courage to have any hope of snatching victory from his seasoned, experienced rivals.

This inexperience manifested itself in the crippling defeat the commander suffered during the Battle of Long Island. In an effort to seize New York, the British general William Howe unleashed a devastating campaign that Washington failed to subdue. So great was the British attack that Washington was forced to retreat his entire army across the East River under cover of darkness. Although this feat itself was remarkable, for the self-critical leader it was a swift and brutal reminder of his own inadequacies as a general, and he quickly realised this war would not be easily won.

But the British had a crippling weakness, too. They were simply too sure that they were going to win. Howe so fatally underestimated the will of the American troops and their reckless leader that he left his Hessian soldiers at Trenton, confident that the war would be won in the next few months. Washington, on the other hand, was acutely aware of the morale of his soldiers. After the defeat in New York and the subsequent humiliating retreat, they needed something positive in order to inspire them, and fortunately Trenton was right there for the taking.







## Rebels

### Organisation

There were 35,000 continentals in the United States with 44,500 militia. Their French allies increased their numbers with 12,000 French soldiers in America and 63,000 at Gibraltar. They also had 53 ships in service throughout the war. George Washington was commander in chief and Nathanael Greene served as major general.

### Weapons

When the war began the colonies did not have a professional standing army of any kind, with many colonies only able to supply minutemen who were required to equip themselves - with most carrying rifles. The army's weapon of choice was the flintlock musket and they also carried bayonets.

### Resources

The Continental Army suffered from massive supply issues. Supplies were repeatedly seized by British patrols. They also had to combat a primitive road system, which resulted in regular shortages of food, clothing, ammunition, tents and a host of essential military equipment, constantly pitching the odds against them.

### Morale

The rebels' greatest weapon was the belief in their grand cause - fighting for their liberty from the oppressive British Crown. It was this strong morale belief in their cause that encouraged American leaders, who knew they were facing a well equipped and disciplined foe, to push on despite multiple crippling defeats.



# Redcoats

## Organisation

There were 56,000 British redcoats in North America along with a combined force of 52,000 loyalists, freed slaves and natives. They also had 78 Royal Navy ships at their service. William Howe served as commander in chief, but there were many decorated generals and officers such as Thomas Gage and Henry Clinton.

## Weapons

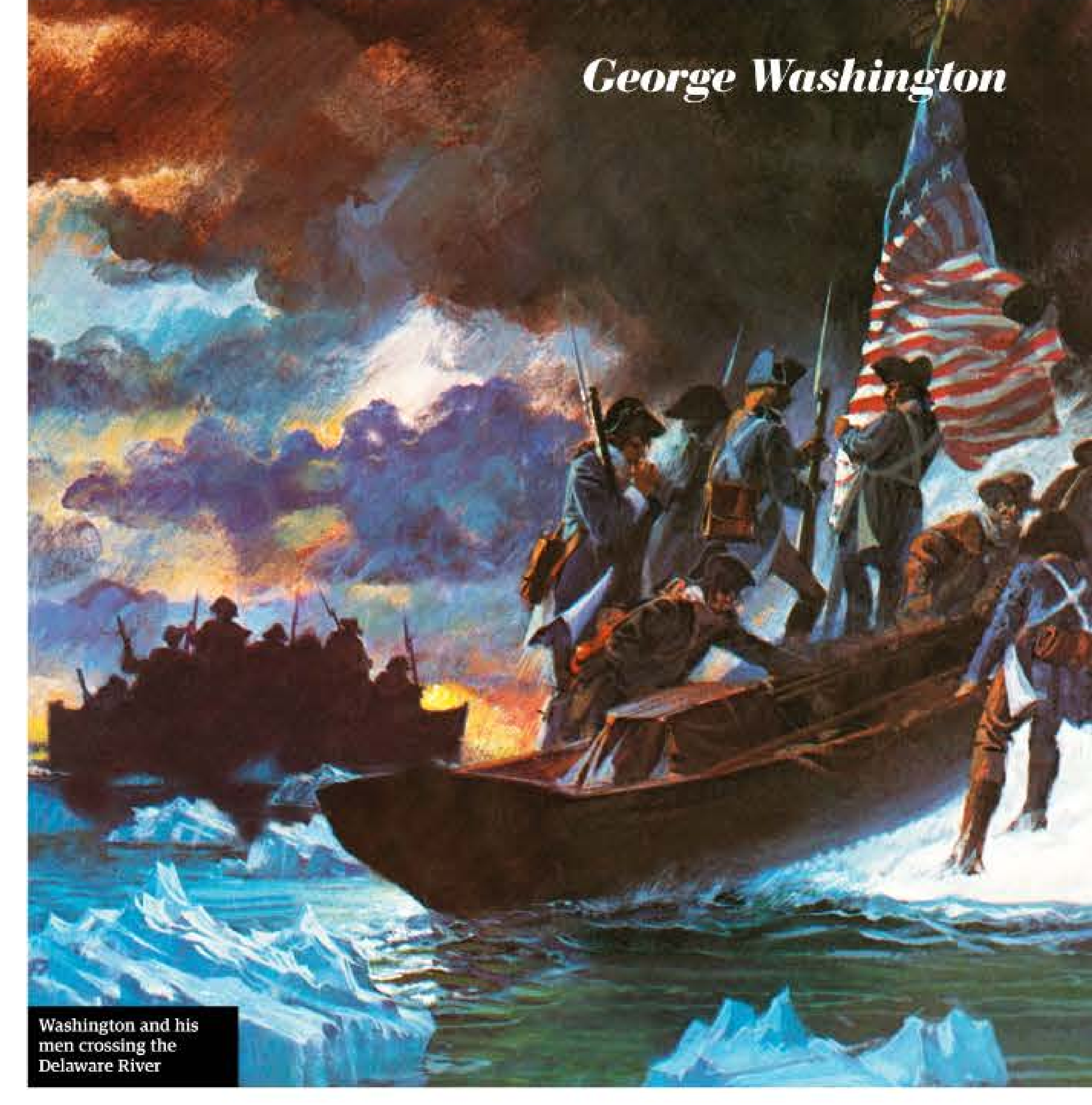
The British army depended on the .75-calibre flintlock musket popularly known as "Brown Bess." They also carried bayonets and, occasionally, short-barrel muskets. The redcoats also used cannons to great effect, to the degree that if an American unit was without cannon, they would not face a cannon-supported British troop.

## Resources

Although British soldiers were better equipped than their American counterparts, they were fighting away from home, and supplies could take months to reach their destinations. Many British had to rely on loyal locals supplying them with food and praying the vital supplies would survive the 4,800km (3,000mi) trip across the ocean.

## Morale

The British believed they could easily steamroll the rebels and this underestimation of their foe cost them dearly. The war was also expensive, and support at home was mixed at best. For many soldiers struggling in terrible conditions away from home, there was little motivation to fight.



Washington and his men crossing the Delaware River

The plan was one only Washington could have thought up - bold, gutsy and downright dangerous, he led his soldiers across the perilous and icy Delaware River on a freezing Boxing Day in 1776. Only 2,400 of his men were able to make it across without turning back, but it was enough. Completely unprepared for the attack, the Hessians at Trenton were overwhelmed and swiftly defeated by Washington and his men. A few days later the commander led a counter-attack on a British force sent to attack his army at Princeton, achieving another small - but essential - American victory.

Meanwhile, the British redcoats still believed the rebellion could be stopped like a cork in a bottle. Howe thought that by taking control of key colonial cities, the river of rebellion would turn into a drought and the population would surrender to British rule. When Howe set his sights on the revolutionary hub of Philadelphia, Washington rode out to meet him, but, perhaps with his previous victories clouding his judgement, the commander was outmatched and Philadelphia fell to the British. However, the colonists' cause received a major boon when British General Burgoyne was forced to surrender his entire army of 6,300 men at the Battle of Saratoga. It seemed that major world players were finally beginning to believe the Americans had a chance of besting the mighty British Empire, and France openly allied itself with the rebels.

> Washington remains one of the tallest and biggest presidents at 1.88m (6'2") and 90kg 200lb)

While General Howe concentrated on capturing key cities, Washington had a revelation. Although individual battles were important, the key to victory was not military success, but instead his ability to keep the heart of the resistance alive and pumping. This was something out of British hands and solely in his own.

This spirit of rebellion faced its most challenging obstacle yet over the long winter of 1977. For six long months the soldiers at the military camp of Valley Forge suffered thousands of disease-ridden deaths. With starvation rife and supplies low, many feared the horrendous conditions would force the desperate army to mutiny. Washington himself faced immense criticism from the American public and Congress, who urged him to hurry the war effort, while behind the scenes anti-Washington movements gained ground. Washington simply replied: "Whenever the public gets dissatisfied with my service [...] I shall quit the helm [...] and retire to a private life." The critics soon fell silent.

Although the conditions had been testing, to put it mildly, the soldiers emerged from the winter in good spirits. Washington demonstrated

that his sting was stronger than ever when his forces attacked the British flank attempting to leave Monmouth Courthouse. Although the battle ultimately ended in a stalemate, Washington had finally achieved what he set out to do since the beginning of the war - hold his own in a pitched battle. This was massive for the Americans; it proved the growing Continental Army was developing its skills at an alarming speed, and if the horrendous winter they had emerged from had not crushed them, what chance did the British have?

The French seemed to share this attitude. On 5 September 1781, 24 French ships emerged victorious against 19 British vessels at the Battle of Chesapeake. The success prevented the British from reinforcing the troops of Lord Cornwallis, who was blockaded in Yorktown, Virginia, and allowed crucial French troops to pour into the Continental Army, bringing vast supplies of artillery with them. This was exactly the opportunity Washington needed, and he didn't plan to let it go to waste.

With the British army trapped and exposed, and his own swelling in size, Washington led his men out of Williamsburg and surrounded Yorktown. From late-September the Continental Army moved steadily closer to the redcoats, forcing them to pull back from their outer defences, which left them open for the Americans and French to use. As the colonists began to set up artilleries, the British pelted them with steady fire. In spite of this and at some great risk to himself, Washington continued to visit and motivate his men on the front line, and by 5 October the commander was ready to make his move.

As a vicious storm raged, Washington grasped his pickaxe and struck several blows into the dirt that would become the new trench the Americans would use to bombard the British. By 5pm on 9 October, the Americans were pelting the British with a relentless stream of cannon fire. The British ships were sunk and soldiers deserted en masse. More American trenches were dug as they gained land, and when Washington's men rushed toward the British redoubt, they overwhelmed the surprised redcoats. As Washington rained artillery fire down on the town, Cornwallis's attempts at escape across the York River were unsuccessful and he finally surrendered.

Little did Washington know that the victory he had secured at Yorktown would lead to the ultimate surrender of British hostilities, the end of the war and ultimately American freedom. On 3 September 1783 the Treaty of Paris was



The Capitol in Washington, DC, under construction

# Siege of Yorktown

### British surrender
Early in the morning on 17 October the British surrender, and by 19 October the men are taken as prisoners of war. Cornwallis refuses to meet with Washington, claiming to be ill while his army lay down their weapons, a crowd of civilians eagerly watching on.

### Naval blockade
The French victory at the Battle of Chesapeake allows admiral De Grasse to set up a blockade that prevents any chance of Cornwallis escaping by sea. This news encourages Washington to march toward Virginia and corner the British officer.

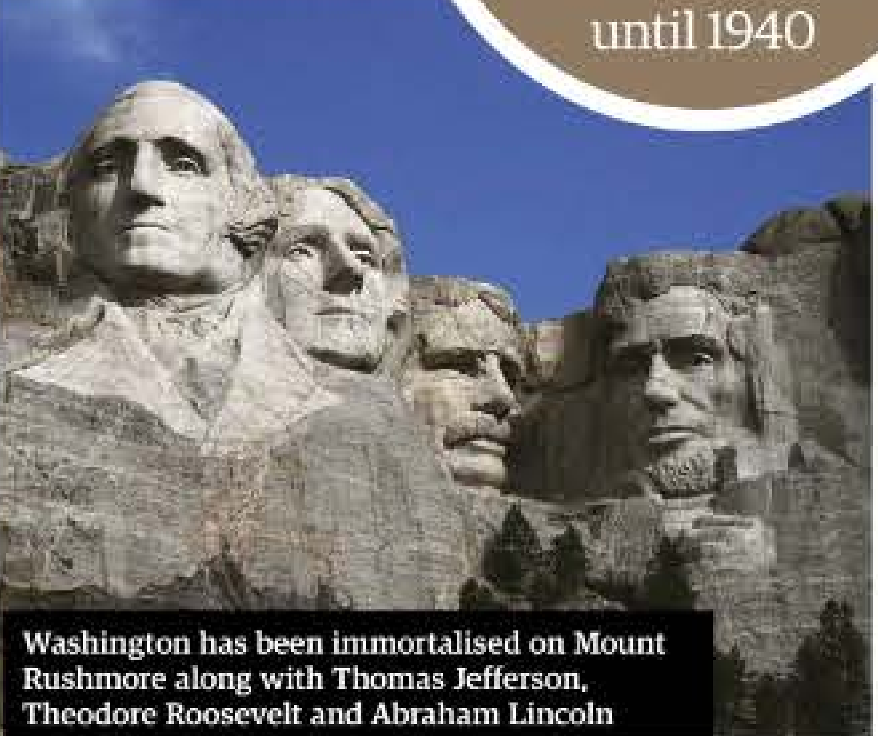
### The American assault
Using the French to distract the British attention, the Americans march toward redoubt #10. They chop through the British defences with axes then charge with their bayonets. Although the redcoats attempt to fight back, they are overwhelmed by the colonists.

### The first attack
The British pull back from their outer defences, which the American and French forces take advantage of. They set up artillery and dig trenches, and by 9 October they begin to bombard the redcoats.

A depiction of Washington's entry into New York in 1759

Washington's choice to decline to serve a third term as president became an unwritten rule for all presidents until 1940





Washington has been immortalised on Mount Rushmore along with Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt and Abraham Lincoln

signed between representatives of both countries, which proclaimed that Britain recognised the independence of the United States. With victory declared, Washington disbanded his army and wished farewell to the men who had valued him not only as a leader, but also a fellow soldier. On 23 December 1783, in an action that would define him in the history books, he resigned as commander in chief of the army and humbly returned to his home in Mount Vernon.

However, without him his country was struggling. With nobody to unite them the states fought and squabbled among themselves over boundaries and inflicted harsh taxes on their own citizens. The ex-commander watched from afar as the land he had led to freedom struggled to support itself. He was dismayed, but hesitant to act. It wasn't until an armed uprising known as Shays' Rebellion took place in Massachusetts that Washington was finally persuaded to step into the limelight once more.

Washington quietly attended the Constitution Convention held in Philadelphia in 1787. There he sat and listened silently to the proceedings, speaking only once. However, his prestige spoke volumes and those gathered there agreed the national government needed more authority - it needed a figure strong and commanding enough to maintain control. Washington was unanimously chosen to fulfil this role. He became president of the convention in 1787, and by 1789 he was unanimously elected once more, but this time as the first-ever president of the United States - the only one in history to receive 100 per cent of the votes. He would serve two terms as president from 1789 to 1797 until he would yet again relinquish the power he could so easily have exploited. In the spring of 1797, he finally returned to his precious Mount Vernon, realising, perhaps more so than any one of the many people who supported him, that ultimate power in the land of the free could not lay solely in one man's hands indefinitely.



## Washington myths cut down



**We get an expert opinion on the myths surrounding this legendary man**

**Stephen Brumwell is a freelance writer and independent historian living in Amsterdam. His book, *George Washington: Gentleman Warrior*, won the 2013 George Washington Book Prize.**

### He had wooden teeth

George Washington was plagued with dental problems from his twenties, and by 1789, had just one of his own teeth remaining. He owned several sets of false teeth, but none was crafted from wood. Instead, Washington's dentures incorporated a variety of materials - bone, 'sea-horse', or hippopotamus ivory, and human teeth - fixed by lead, gold and metal wire. The belief that Washington's false teeth were wooden probably originated in the brown-stained appearance of surviving examples - apparently owing to his fondness for port wine.

### He cut down a cherry tree and confessed to his father

Perhaps the best known of all the legends spun around Washington, the 'cherry tree story' first surfaced in a biography written after his death by Mason Locke Weems. Concerned with portraying Washington as an exemplary role model for his countrymen, 'Parson Weems' concocted the fable of the six-year-old hatcheting his father's prized cherry tree, and then deflecting parental wrath by frankly confessing to the deed with the words "I can't tell a lie, Pa."

### Washington was a moonshiner

While there's no proof that Washington set up illicit liquor stills to make moonshine, he was certainly in the forefront of American whiskey production. On the advice of his Scottish farm manager, James Anderson, he established a whiskey distillery at Mount Vernon in 1797. By the year of Washington's death, 1799, this was producing almost 41,640l (11,000gal) of rye and corn whiskey, making it the largest US distillery of its day.

### He threw a silver dollar across the Potomac River

Standing 188cm (6'2") tall, and with a well-muscled physique, young George Washington was renowned for his strength. Yet even Washington in his prime would have struggled to hurl a silver dollar across the Potomac River, which is more than 1.6km (1mi) wide opposite his Virginian home at Mount Vernon. Also, silver dollars were only introduced in 1794, when Washington was already in his sixties.

### He wore a wig

Although wigs were fashionable during Washington's lifetime, he never wore one, preferring to keep his own hair, which was reddish-brown, long and tied back in a tight queue, or 'pigtail'. However, Washington regularly used the white hair powder that was customary among men of his wealthy social class, especially for formal occasions, and this gave the impression of a wig, apparent in many of his portraits.

1797 – 1801

# John Adams

## A Founding Father, a vice president and a president, John Adams was a formidable figure in the early days of the USA

Born in Quincy, Massachusetts on 30 October 1735, John Adams was the eldest of three brothers. The Adams family traced their ancestry back to the first generation of Puritan settlers who came from Wales to land in New England in the early 17th century. Adams' father, Deacon John Adams, a farmer, craftsman and shoemaker, saw education as paramount to his sons' upbringing as John enrolled at a school in nearby Braintree. The drive for education seemingly did the trick, as by the age of 16, John Adams was on his way to a scholarship at the prestigious Harvard University, just like his father before him.

Adams began life at Harvard in 1751 and studied for four years, receiving both an undergraduate and a masters in Law. After graduation, the next few years were spent teaching at a grammar school in Worcester while contemplating what to do with his life. He married his third cousin Abigail Smith and toyed with the idea of joining the government, but eventually decided that the best course of action would be to move to Boston and undertake further studies in the hope of being a lawyer. While living in Boston, Adams became known as an advocate for the patriot cause due to his opposition of the 1765 Stamp Act and the Townshend Acts of 1767 that George III imposed on his empire's colonies in America. The first act ordered that every American colonist had to pay tax on every piece of paper - from legal documents to newspapers - while the second imposed a tariff on glass and tea imported into the colonies. This angered many Americans, with Adams being just one of them. His response was to write articles for the *Boston Gazette*, claiming that the act deprived his people of the right to be taxed by consent. Fast-forward five years, though, and Adams was defending the British soldiers for their role in an event known as the Boston Massacre.

> Adams served on 90 committees in the early days of government, more than any other congressman

By 1774 Adams had seemingly calmed his patriotic views and had knuckled down to concentrate on his law studies. His dedication paid dividends and later that year he was successfully elected to the Massachusetts Assembly. Things got even better when he was chosen as one of the five men to represent the colony at the First Continental Congress on 5 September 1774. Meeting in Philadelphia, men from all colonies except Georgia met to discuss what they saw as 'intolerable acts' from the British government towards their homeland.

The following year the rebellion against British rule stepped up a gear when Congress met for a second time and subsequently established the Continental Army. Adams, now wielding a substantial amount of power, chose George Washington as commander-in-chief of the army as war broke out in 1775. Adams' influence grew further when Congress permitted his idea of each colony taking on an independent government in May 1776. The workaholic Adams was serving on



**2**

**JOHN ADAMS**

**Federalist, 1735 - 1826**

**Brief Bio**

When George Washington stepped down from presidency in the spring of 1797, John Adams was voted in to lead the country. Narrowly elected over fellow Founding Father Thomas Jefferson, Adams successfully kept the young United States out of wars with European powers in the post-Washington era. His policies polarised the nation and he lasted exactly three years in the White House.



The President's House in Philadelphia was the official residence of both George Washington and John Adams before the latter moved to the White House in 1800

# Life in the time of John Adams

## The American Revolution

Eight years of war leads to American independence from Great Britain. An event in which Adams was instrumental, 13 of British America's colonies rebelled against the Crown and the first shot was fired on 19 April 1775 at the battles of Lexington and Concord. Surrender came at Yorktown in October 1781.

## The French Revolution

The American version wasn't the only revolution in Adams' life. The movement began in France in the late 18th Century and culminated in the storming of the Bastille in 1789 and the execution of the King Louis XVI in 1792. The First Republic was formed and the rise of Napoleon had begun.

## Jacobite Rebellion

Bonnie Prince Charlie arrives in the Highlands determined to reclaim the British Crown for the exiled House of Stuart. After reaching as far as south as Derby, British divisions are recalled from the continent and the advance loses momentum. The rebellion ends at the Battle of Culloden in April 1746.

## The trans-Atlantic slave trade declines

The African slave trade triangle began in the 16th Century but by the late 1800s it is declining. The 1791 Haitian Revolution is a large-scale slave uprising and by 1803 Denmark is the first to ban the slave trade. Britain follows suit in 1807.

## Samuel Johnson dictionary published

On 15 April 1755 lexicographer Samuel Johnson's Dictionary of the English Language is published. Taking over eight years to compile, it lists 40,000 words, each with detailed definitions. A great scholarly achievement, the French equivalent took 40 scholars 55 years to complete.

## The Boston Massacre

Despite its name, this event was more of a street fight. In 1770, patriotism was running through the colonies after further taxation from the British Crown. On the evening of 5 March an argument broke out between British private Hugh White and a group of patriots outside the Custom House in the town of Boston. As the spat escalated, a mob of around 50 colonists berated and then attacked the group of British Redcoats. Throwing sticks and stones, the British soldiers were antagonised and after one was knocked down by a projectile, they began firing. Using their rifles, the soldiers ended up killing three of the Bostonians with another eight were injured (two of which died of their wounds).

A meeting was called to discuss the events and resulted in the angry locals demanding the trial of the soldiers for murder. A trial was called and John Adams, despite being well known as a staunch patriot was chosen as the British lawyer. He defended the British, stating that their lives were potentially in danger, eventually leading to six being found not guilty and two charged with manslaughter. The Boston Massacre only intensified the American distrust of the British and helped sow the seeds of revolution.



Also known as the 'Incident on King Street', the Boston Massacre was a key event in Adams' law career and his started his apparent pro-British stance that would later dog his presidency



The five-man draft committee present the Declaration of Independence to Congress. Adams is the man with his hand on his hip

over 90 committees and wrote the prelude to what would become the Declaration of Independence, and later seconded Richard Henry Lee's resolution of independence. The movement for freedom from the British was underway and Congress appointed Adams to draft what would be the final declaration. He would complete this job with Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, Robert R Livingston and Roger Sherman, and it was approved on 4 July.

The fiercely patriotic Adams was given the title of head of the board of war and ordinance in 1777, personally supervising the constant development of the Continental Army. While war was raging, Adams utilised his negotiating skills and managed to persuade the French to ally with the Americans and use their ships against the Royal Navy. Domestically he was busy writing the Massachusetts constitution, which went on to be the template for other states to follow and is now the oldest of its kind in the world. Desiring further alliances with France, Congress sent Adams back to Europe along with his two sons, John Quincy and Charles. Despite being forced to divert to Spain after a leak, and having to make the rest of the journey to Paris by land in mid-winter, he made it to the French capital. Sadly the French ministers only desired to work with Franklin (whose relationship had soured with Adams) and not Adams, as he was too forceful in his approach. Adams also had little luck in negotiations in Amsterdam, but the well-timed American victory at the Battle of Yorktown convinced the Dutch banking houses to secure a loan with the US. As the war continued to turn in the patriots' favour, the French attitude became warmer to a Franco-American alliance. The Peace of Paris in 1783 secured their support and was a triumph of Franklin's diplomacy and Adams' determination. With the war finally over, the men

> Adams' final words were "Thomas Jefferson survives." Sadly he didn't know that his old friend had died just hours earlier

### *Defining moment*
**Stamp Act crisis**
**1765**

Passed by the British in May, the Stamp Act debatably initiated mainstream political activism in the American colonies. John Adams was just one of the colonists who was appalled at the act and three months later his essay 'A Dissertation on Cannon and Feudal Law' appeared in the *Boston Gazette*. Inspired by the perceived unfairness of the act, Adams argued that it was unconstitutional and his writings influenced, among others, the Sons of Liberty group. Men took to the streets to riot and intimidate tax collectors and Adams was now seen by many not as not just a lawyer, but as an agitator.



## *Timeline*

1735

- **John Adams born**
The future second president of the United States is born to John Adams Sr and Susana Boylston in Massachusetts. He is the eldest of three brothers and has ancestry in Wales, from where his Puritan ancestors emigrated in the 1630s.
**1735**

- **Enrolment at Harvard**
Going against his father's wishes for him to enter government, Adams, aged 16, instead gains a scholarship at Harvard to study law. He eventually graduates in 1755 with both a bachelor's degree and a masters.
**1751**

- **Early writing career**
Always a man who believed in the pen being mightier than the sword, Adams begins his fledgling writing career at local newspapers writing under a false name, honing the skills that would define his later work.
**1763**

- **Marriage to Abigail Smith**
The following year Adams marries his childhood sweetheart and third cousin, Abigail Smith. They end up having five children and stay together happily married for the rest of their lives.
**1764**

- **Boston Massacre**
On 5 March, the young lawyer faces his toughest task to date as five colonists are killed by British soldiers a scuffle in the town of Boston. Adams is elected to defend the soldiers, and successfully argues for their acquittal.
**1770**

- **Entry to Continental Congress**
After a period in the Massachusetts Assembly, Adams represents his colony at the very first Continental Congress in 1774. He is instrumental in the creation of the Continental Army a year later.
**1774**


Adams is portrayed as more of a political theorist than a politician per se, which hindered his tenure as president

returned to the newly established and independent United States of America.

Back in the New World, Adams found himself as a leading candidate for the presidential election of 1789, the first one in the country's fledgling history. George Washington was the unanimous choice and successfully gained the presidency, but Adams did take on the vice-presidency as a consolation, ahead of Messrs Franklin and Jefferson. Adams didn't take kindly to his new role and saw it as "the most insignificant office that ever the invention of man contrived or his imagination conceived." In his new occupation, Adams supported all the major initiatives in the new government, including containing the Whiskey Rebellion of 1794 and passing secretary of the treasury Alexander Hamilton's new financial plan. Washington didn't seek a third term as president in 1796 and after a hotly contested election against friend and rival Thomas Jefferson, Adams - despite accusations of pro-British leanings - became the second president of the United States by a narrow margin in 1797. Upon assuming the presidency, the federalist Adams tried to get Jefferson on board, but he declined. This would be the first of many issues to befall Adams' regime.

The first problem the new president had to address was to pick up the pieces from Washington's tenure. Adams' biggest mistake was to keep the same cabinet that Washington had. A federalist almost only by name, he was left to deal with what was a faltering Congress. The cabinet turned out to be extremely disloyal to their president and often openly opposed him. The ruling of the Alien and Sedition Acts in 1798 aimed at stiffening national security and ending newspaper libel, but ended up decreasing his popularity even more, despite these ideas actually being passed by Congress prior to his presidency. Foreign policy was a tricky venture during his administration. It initially favoured good relations with Britain, but an ongoing feud between France and Britain had now broken out into full-scale war. Negotiations with France then disintegrated further after the French offered a bribe to the USA. Many called for war, but Adams was reluctant to drag the US into yet another conflict and stubbornly maintained his country's neutrality. Despite his best efforts, an undeclared conflict known as the Quasi-War ensued. Arising from a diplomatic episode known as the XYZ Affair, the French ordered the seizure of American merchant ships after negotiations broke down. The battles were limited to naval attacks and the fledgling US Navy performed well, capturing many French privateers and vessels. Even though he avoided war, Adams stressed the importance of the armed forces and is credited with establishing the US Navy as a force as well as guiding the young USA through a tough post-Washington period.

His plump appearance earned Adams the nickname 'His Rotundity' while he was president

The episode with France was ultimately a deathblow to Adams' popularity, turning the Federalist Party against him. In the 1800 election he failed in his re-election campaign to Thomas Jefferson.

In post-presidential life, the once-determined patriot and American political behemoth lived a quiet existence on his family farm. He continued to correspond with old friend Jefferson and finally reconciled with him in 1812. The two men both passed away on the same day on 4 July 1826, the 50th anniversary of American independence. John Adams had six children and his son John Quincy became the sixth president of the US, adding to his father's legacy in US politics.

"The episode with France was ultimately a deathblow to Adams' popularity"

## Defining moment
### Boston Tea Party
**1773**

John Adams was not in town on the fateful December night of the Boston Tea Party and was shocked when he heard of what happened the next day. He was understandably concerned at how the British would react but nevertheless believed action such as this was both inevitable and significant, and so ultimately supported it. He felt that Britain would not take the colonists' demands seriously until forced to do so. Adams wrote: "This destruction of the tea is so bold, so daring, so intrepid and so inflexible, and it must have so important consequences and so lasting that I can't but consider it an epocha in history."



## Defining moment
### XYZ Affair
**1798**

A diplomatic incident involving France and the United States, this was a significant moment in Adams' presidency. The French government was struggling to finance its wars and as the USA had now allied with Britain under the terms of the 1794 Jay Treaty, the country decided to attack US merchant shipping. In response, Adams sent three envoys to France but they were unable to meet with the foreign ministers and were instead approached by three other ministers who became known as X,Y and Z. An agreement wasn't made until 1800 when an undeclared war, the Quasi-War, raged for two years.

**Declaration of Independence signed**
The game-changing declaration announced that the 13 American colonies were now independent states and no longer part of the British Empire. 56 men sign the document, including Adams.
**1776**

**Trips to Europe**
Adams travels to Europe in order to meet with the British, the French and the Dutch, seeking peace but also aid. His biggest success is with the Dutch, who offer a $2 million loan following the American victory at Yorktown.
**1779-1782**

**Treaty of Paris**
Along with Benjamin Franklin and John Jay, Adams signs the Treaty of Paris, ending the war with Britain after the victory at Yorktown and formally recognising the United States as indepenent of the British Crown.
**1783**

**Vice president**
In March, George Washington is elected as the inaugural president of the new United States, with Adams chosen as his vice president. Adams sees his position as almost pointless, given his lack of practical authority, however he remains in the job until 1797.
**1789**

**President of the United States**
On 4 March, Adams is sworn in and with his Federalist Party, gets straight to work, creating the US Navy Department and passing the Alien and Sedition Acts shortly after arriving in office.
**1797**

1919

**Death**
At the age of 90, Adams passes away. His death marks the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence and comes only a few hours after the death of his friend and rival, Thomas Jefferson.
**1826**

## 1801 – 1809

# Thomas Jefferson

### He wrote the Declaration of Independence, but did Thomas Jefferson truly believe that all men are created equal?

Thomas Jefferson's earliest memory was when, at the age of two, he was carried in the arms of a black slave to his family's new home - a tobacco plantation. During his childhood, it was expected that the young boy would grow up to become a typical Virginian slave owner, just like his father, but Thomas was keen to pursue a life beyond the plantation. He loved reading and had a keen interest in science, linguistics and natural history, and it was in law that he would first make his mark, being admitted to the Virginia bar in 1767.

It was a time of flux in North America. When the American Revolution began in 1775, Jefferson was appointed a Virginian representative in the Continental Congress at Philadelphia. He had been hand picked by John Adams, an early leader of the independence movement, to join him on a committee that was tasked with writing a Declaration of Independence.

This was to be Jefferson's finest hour. He was asked to pen the draft that the committee discussed, and in doing so became the primary author of one of history's most iconic documents. However, Jefferson did not get it all his own way. His original draft stated: "We hold these truths to be sacred and undeniable; that all men are created equal and independent." It was Benjamin Franklin who rewrote the preamble, changing it to the famous: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal."

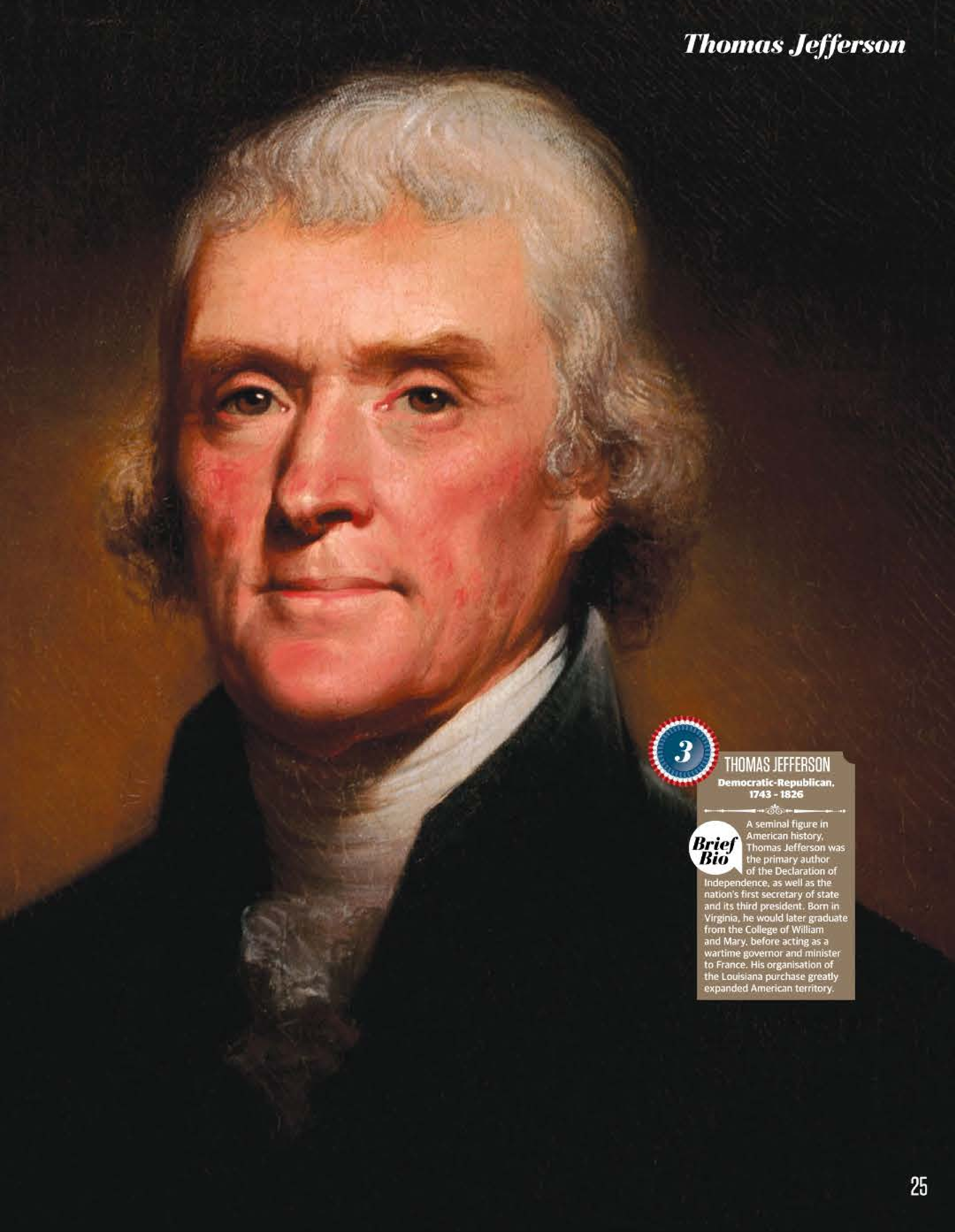
The Declaration of Independence was ratified by the Continental Congress on 4 July 1776, after which Jefferson returned to Virginia and saw out the rest of the American Revolution in local government. He supervised the creation of a state constitution and revised the legal system before becoming governor of Virginia. He was in charge when the British invaded and sacked the state capital, Richmond, in 1781; Jefferson narrowly escaped being captured by the Redcoats. Had the author of the Declaration of Independence been imprisoned by the British, it would have been a huge propaganda victory for the colonial masters.

With the end of the war, Jefferson was again sent to Congress. The delegates were building a new country, and as one of the United States of America's most renowned Founding Fathers, Jefferson was given a special task - dispatched as minister to France to solidify relations between the two nations.

Jefferson spent four years in Paris until he was recalled in September 1789, just as the French Revolution was gathering pace, having witnessed the storming of the Bastille.

Jefferson was a firm supporter of the French Revolution and intended to return to France as soon as possible, but his plans changed when the new president, George Washington, asked him to serve as the first secretary of state. It was here, at the very heart of American politics, where Jefferson hoped to influence the future shape of his country.

Nearly a quarter of the Declaration of Independence draft that Jefferson wrote was removed by Congress

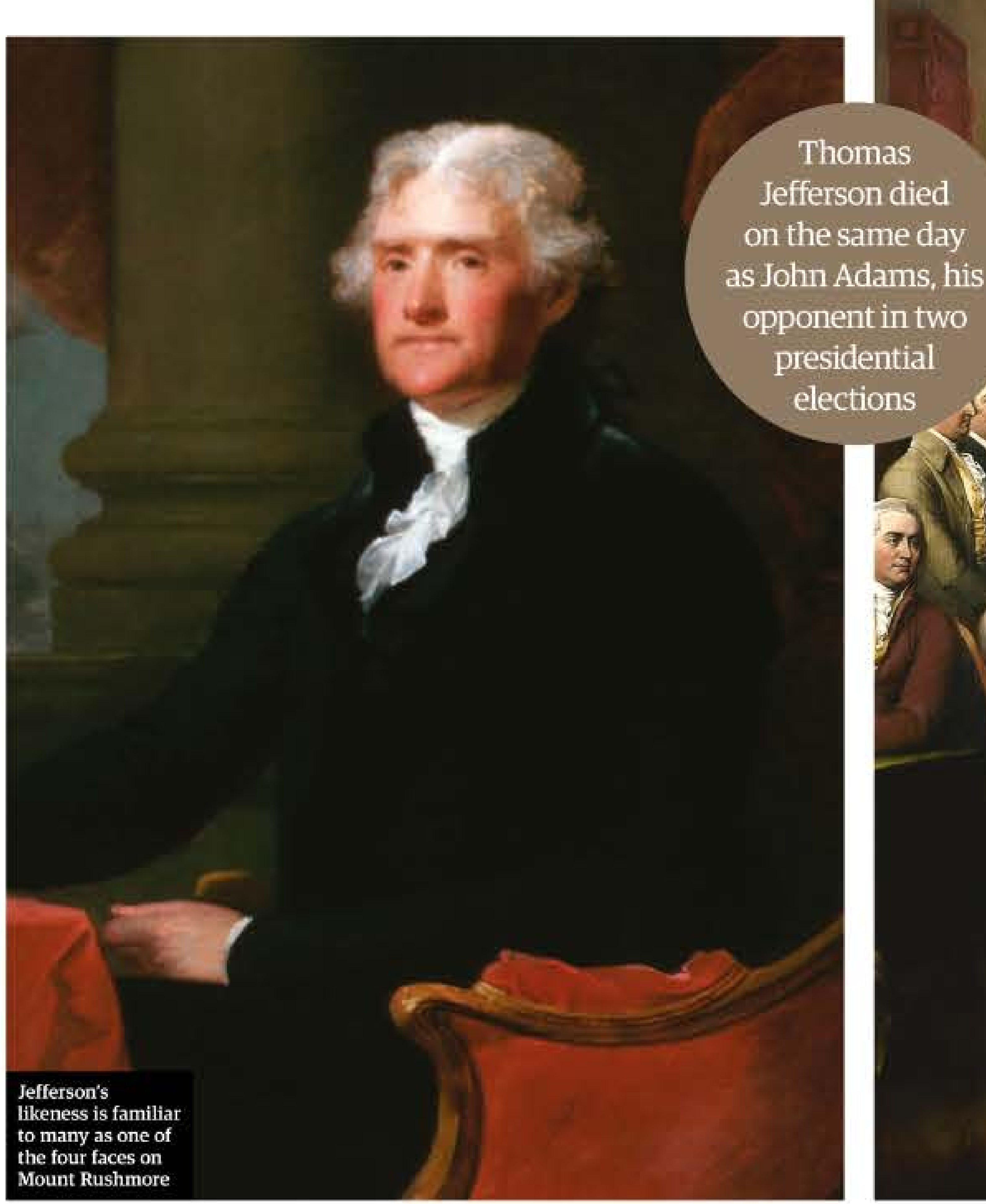


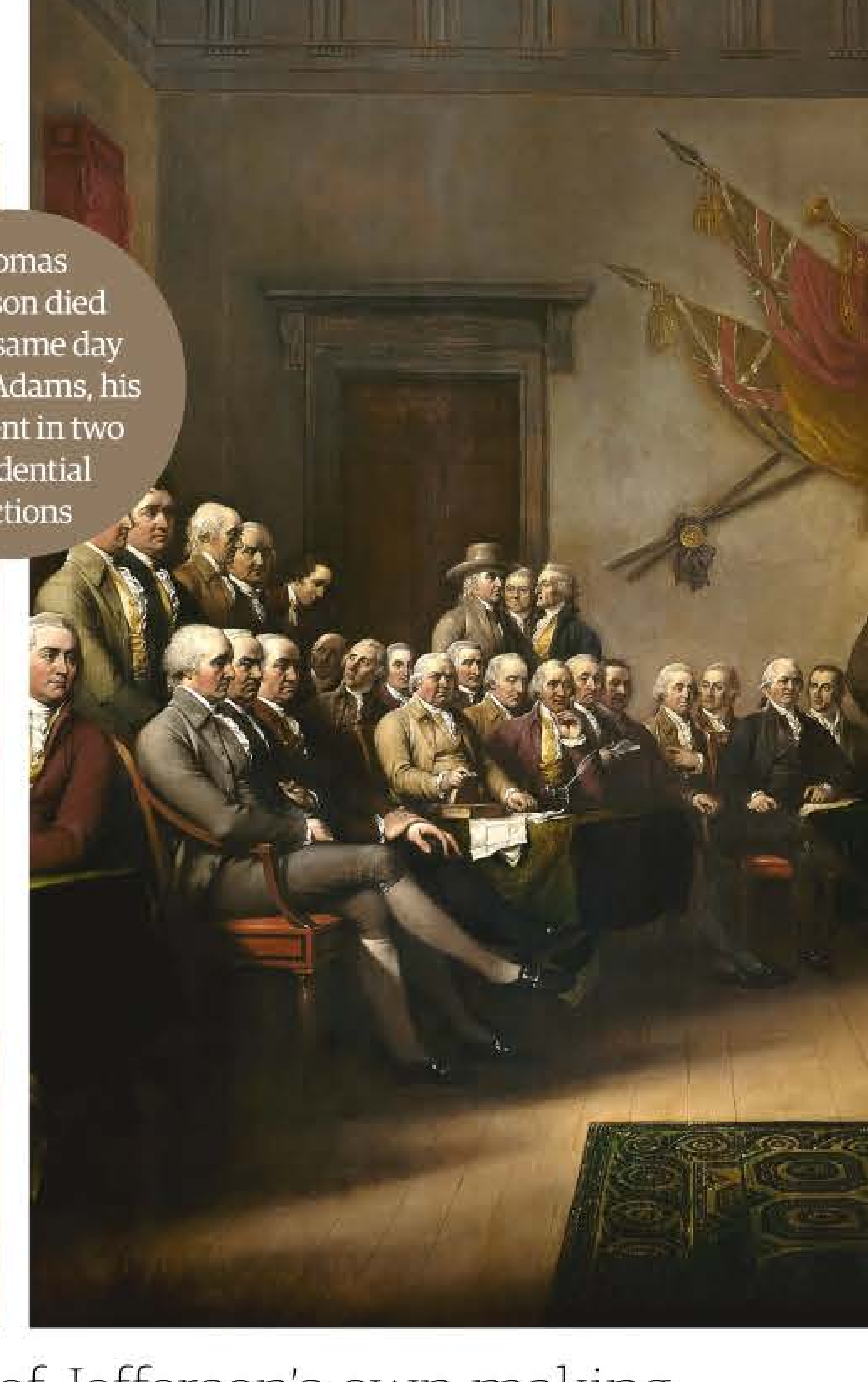

## THOMAS JEFFERSON

**Democratic-Republican, 1743 - 1826**

**Brief Bio**

A seminal figure in American history, Thomas Jefferson was the primary author of the Declaration of Independence, as well as the nation's first secretary of state and its third president. Born in Virginia, he would later graduate from the College of William and Mary, before acting as a wartime governor and minister to France. His organisation of the Louisiana purchase greatly expanded American territory.


Jefferson's likeness is familiar to many as one of the four faces on Mount Rushmore



Thomas Jefferson died on the same day as John Adams, his opponent in two presidential elections

Although the American Revolutionaries were united in their opposition to colonial rule from London, they were not in agreement as to how the new United States should function after independence. Two factions began to develop. One, led by Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton, wanted a strong, central, national government. They became known as the Federalists. Jefferson was alarmed by the mounting power of central government; instead he wanted greater rights for the individual states in the union. Like-minded individuals began to gather around him and they collectively became known as the Republicans.

Jefferson was unable to prevent the Federalists from dominating government and stepped down in 1793, stating a desire to return to family life. However, when George Washington declined to stand for a third term as president in 1796, the new country lost its unifying leader. Jefferson returned to the front line of politics, standing on a Republican platform in the presidential election, but lost out to his former revolutionary colleague and now Federalist opponent John Adams. The rules then in force stated that as he was the candidate with the second-highest number of votes, Jefferson would become vice-president.

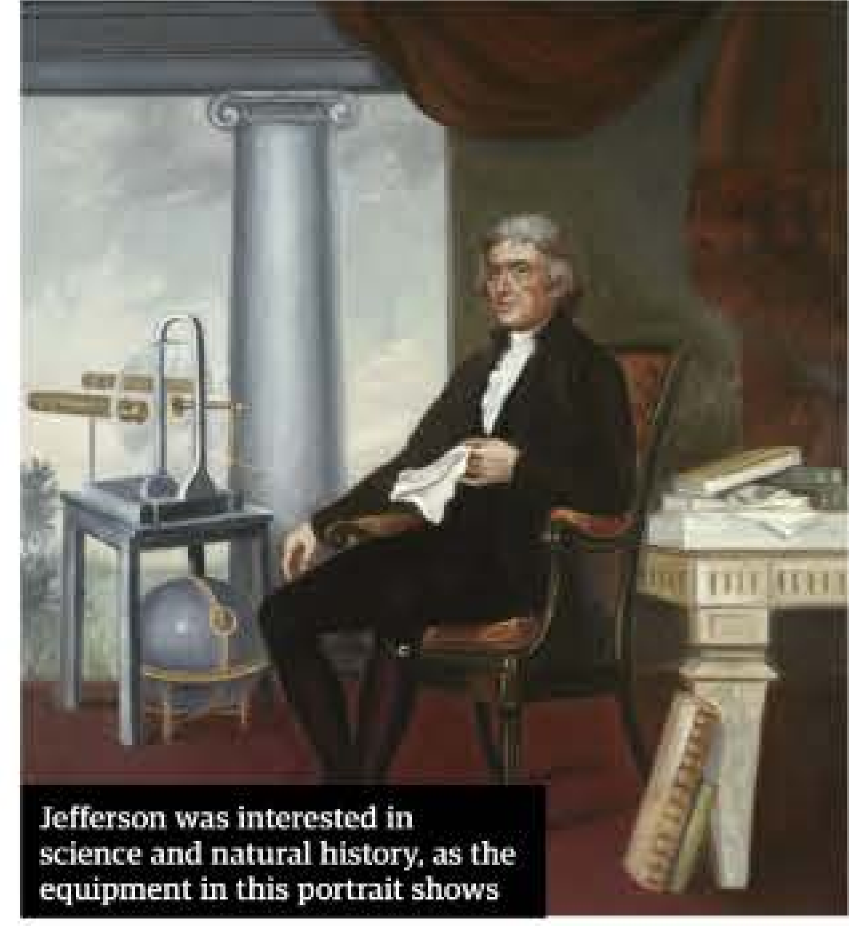
"A problem of Jefferson's own making was his attitude to Native Americans"

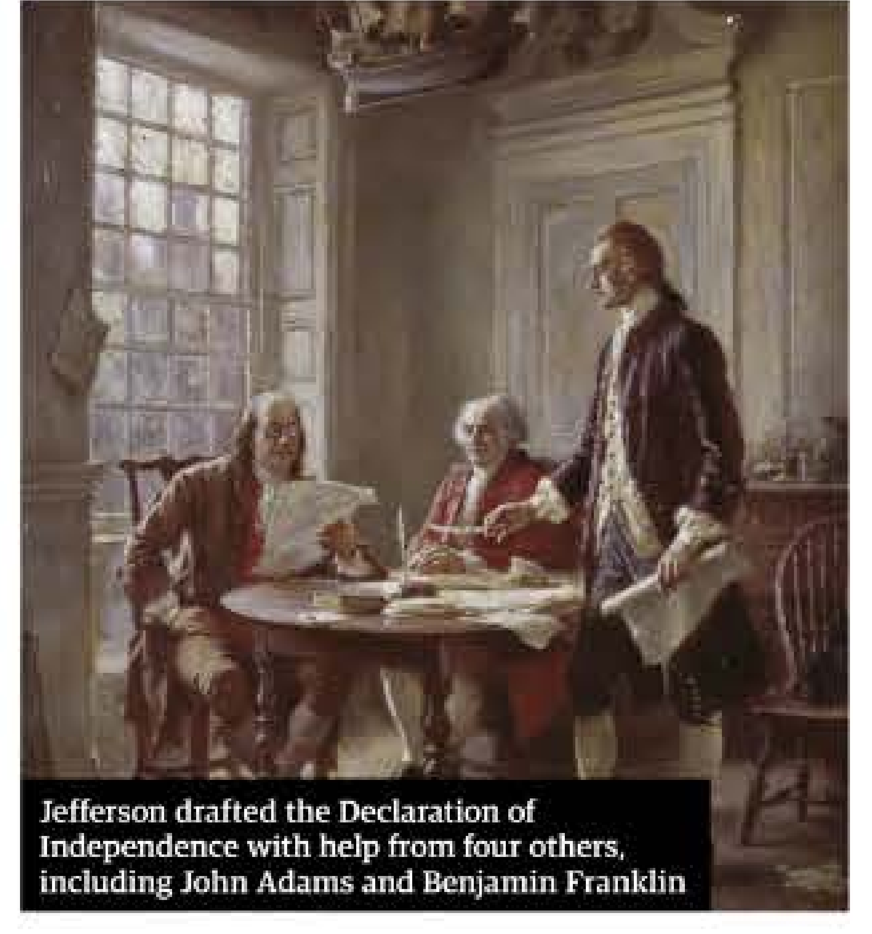
Jefferson was still unable to prevent Federalist policies from being passed, however, and took the dramatic step of writing the Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions with his fellow Republican leader and political ally James Madison. They kept their authorship secret - for good reason. The resolutions they had penned declared that Congress could not exercise powers unless they were specifically granted by the states, and that the over-arching power of Congress could "necessarily drive these states into revolution and blood." Jefferson was actively raising the possibility of rebellion against the government of which he was vice-president. Had his authorship of the resolutions been uncovered, he could conceivably have been impeached for treason.

Jefferson stood against Adams for a second time in the 1800 presidential election, this time beating him and becoming the third president of the United States of America. Jefferson resided in the White House for two terms, between 1801 and 1809, a period during which the United States expanded beyond the original 13 colonies. Under the Louisiana Purchase, 828,000 square miles were bought from France for $15 million, doubling the size of the country. Westward expansion also began, with Jefferson approving the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific coast.

Back in Washington, DC, Jefferson was finally able to dismantle much of the Federalist system constructed by Alexander Hamilton. It was a deliberate strategy, named the 'Revolution of 1800' by Jefferson, and helped the Republicans become the pre-eminent force in the land. Jeffersonian Republicans would dominate

Jefferson (in red) presents a draft of the Declaration of Independence to Congress


Jefferson was interested in science and natural history, as the equipment in this portrait shows


Jefferson drafted the Declaration of Independence with help from four others, including John Adams and Benjamin Franklin

national politics for the next 25 years under Jefferson and his two successors, James Madison and James Monroe, while the once dominant Federalists faded away.

However, the Jefferson administration was not without its problems. His first vice-president, Aaron Burr, was a thorn in his side, going as far as mortally wounding Alexander Hamilton in a personal duel. When Burr fled west and was embroiled in plots to seize control of US territory, Jefferson wanted Burr to feel the full wrath of the law, but the president was enraged when he was acquitted.

> When the original Library of Congress burned down, Jefferson offered his personal library as a replacement

A problem of Jefferson's own making was his attitude to Native American peoples, who were a barrier to his dreams of westward expansion. Jefferson advocated peaceful assimilation with the tribes to the west, encouraging them to give up their traditional nomadic lifestyle and culture. If this did not succeed, he was willing to use force: "If ever we are constrained to lift the hatchet against any tribe, we will never lay it down until that tribe is exterminated, or driven beyond the Mississippi."

Although Jefferson never went as far as waging war against the Native Americans, his ideas signalled a troubling attitude to other races that has been used against him by modern critics. It's a similar case in the subject most commonly used to censure Jefferson – slavery.

Jefferson was one of the biggest slaveholders in Virginia, owning more than 600 people over his lifetime and taking part in both buying and selling of slaves. However, Jefferson was a reluctant slaveholder. His original draft of the Declaration of Independence included a passage that was critical of the slave trade, but it was removed by Congress. During his presidency, the international slave trade was banned, stopping the importation of new slaves from Africa; earlier in his career, Jefferson made attempts to ban it in the Western Territories.

Rumours also abounded that Jefferson was in a long-term relationship with one of his own slaves, Sally Hemings, and had fathered several children by her. DNA evidence suggests this claim is likely to be true, although the proof is not conclusive. The relationship probably began after the death of Jefferson's wife, when she was aged just 33, possibly when Jefferson was minister to France and Hemings travelled there with his daughter.

Jefferson embarked on 17 years of political retirement after leaving the White House in 1809, although he kept busy – befitting his interest in education and learning, he helped to found the University of Virginia. He died on 4 July 1826, 50 years to the day that his greatest achievement, the Declaration of Independence, was ratified. However, Jefferson was much more than just the author of the world's most famous declaration. He not only helped to win independence for the American colonies, he was a key influence in helping to shape the United States as it is today and remains an American hero.



4

JAMES MADISON
Democratic-Republican, 1751 - 1836

**Brief Bio** Born in Virginia as a British citizen, James Madison would go on to be a fundamental figure in the founding of the United States. He was instrumental in the creation of both the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, and he served as the nation's fourth president, successfully leading the country through the War of 1812.

Madison's portrait appeared on the old $5,000 bill, but this has not been printed since 1946 and has been recalled since 1969

*1809 – 1817*

# James Madison

## The so-called 'Father of the Constitution' led the US into a grizzly war with the British and emerged as a respected statesman

James Madison, born in Virginia in 1751, grew up the eldest of 12 children. Perhaps it was this that helped shape his presidential abilities, for he did not have much of a commanding presence otherwise: at just 5'4" Madison remains the shortest president to date, and he was frequently described as sickly and pale. At his inauguration Washington Irving even described him as "but a withered little apple-John".

But despite his shortcomings in stature and charm (he was known also as a quiet, timid individual), Madison displayed an astonishing attention to detail and a strong work ethic. A student of history and government at Princeton (then known as the College of New Jersey), he was appointed a colonel in the Orange County militia as Virginia began preparing for the American Revolutionary War. However, it soon became apparent he wasn't cut out for a military career and turned his attention to a political one instead, participating in the framing of the Virginia Constitution in 1776, serving in the Continental Congress and eventually becoming a leader in the Virginia Assembly.

During this time, he met Thomas Jefferson, who would later become the third president of the United States, and the pair became lifelong friends. Jefferson helped give Madison's political ideas some credence, particularly those following the colonies' declaration of independence from Britain in 1776. The Articles of Confederation - in essence the first constitution of the United States - soon followed,

but to Madison's dismay they gave the bulk of power to individual state legislature, meaning states could act like individual countries, rather than as part of a union. Madison felt this put national Congress in a position of weakness, unable to manage federal debt or a national army.

He believed that the United States needed a strong federal state, where no one government faction had greater power than any other. Madison presented his ideas for the first time in May 1787, at the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia. He envisioned a government with three distinct arms – legislative, executive and judicial – which would form the basis of the US Constitution. This vision lead to his nickname as 'Father of the Constitution', although he repeatedly countered that the Constitution was not "the offspring of a single brain" but actually "the work of many heads and many hands."

Federalists supported the new Constitution, but after it was sanctioned in 1788 and the new government became functional, Madison – then elected to the newly-formed US House of Representatives – found himself at odds with the Federalists on a number of issues. As a result, he and Thomas Jefferson founded the United States' first opposition political party, the Democratic-Republican Party, in 1792. Interestingly, Jefferson, Madison and later, James Monroe, were the only Democratic-Republicans to become presidents, as the party split into competing factions during the 1820s.

When Jefferson became president, he appointed Madison as secretary of state, a position which he used to help acquire the Louisiana territory from the French in 1803, effectively doubling the size of the United States.

But trouble was brewing across the pond. As Great Britain and France warred with one another, American vessels were frequently caught in the middle, routinely stopped and seized to prevent Americans from 'trading with the enemy'. Diplomatic efforts failed, so Jefferson and Madison simply enacted the Embargo Act of 1807, forbidding American ships from travelling to foreign ports and stopping exports from the US. Unsurprisingly, it proved economically disastrous for American merchants, and was suspended in 1809 when Jefferson left office.

Despite this oversight Madison became the United States' fourth president, but still he continued to face problems from overseas. Britain and France continued their attacks on American ships following the embargo, impeding US trade and routinely supporting Native Americans in battles against US settlers.

The situation escalated, and Madison declared war on Britain in 1812. But the US was nowhere near ready for such an enormous event. Congress didn't have an army, nor did it have the money to procure one, and several states, rallying against 'Mr Madison's War' made it clear their militia was forbidden from joining the campaign.

Yet despite the ongoing trade issues, military campaigns and widespread distrust of his foreign policies, Madison ran for re-election against Federalist candidate DeWitt Clinton, and won. But the War of 1812 still raged on and in August 1814 Madison and other political figures were forced to flee Washington DC as British troops invaded and burned a number of important American buildings, including the White House, the Capitol as well as the Library of Congress.

> It's commonly thought Madison was a Freemason, but in a letter to a friend in 1832 he claims he was "a stranger" to Freemasonry

Finally, tired of fighting, Britain and the United States negotiated an end to the war in the form of the Treaty of Ghent, signed in December 1814. However this treaty was not signed before US troops won a significant victory at the Battle of New Orleans, where 4,732 American soldiers took on 11,000 British militia and won decisively, slaughtering 700 British men, capturing 500 soldiers and wounding 1,400 more. The American side, however, saw just seven killed and six wounded. This major victory helped shine a positive light on the controversial war, and after two terms in office, Madison left Washington in 1817 hailed for his triumphs, rather than remembered for his mistakes.

## A poorer president

Madison left his presidency a poorer man than he was when he entered, due to the financial collapse of his plantation. Some historians believe that his growing debt was the main reason he prevented his personal notes from being published in his lifetime – he knew they were worth a great deal and wanted wife Dolley to have a financial cushion if needs be.

In his later years, though, he became obsessed with 'straightening out' and modifying documents, changing dates and adding sentences where he saw fit.

Dolley sold the papers to Congress in 1848, not realising that her son, John Payne Todd, had kept a number of more valuable notes for himself, which he sold periodically to various creditors to pay debts until his death in 1851.

Relations between the US government and Native Americans were consistently strained throughout Madison's presidency

## Life in the time of James Madison

### Newfound nationalism

After the War of 1812 the United States began to assert a newfound sense of nationalism, and the US would rally around national heroes such as Battle of New Orleans commander Andrew Jackson, and take particular pride in symbols of national pride, such as Francis Scott Key's poem 'The Star-Spangled Banner'.

### North and south

The economies of the north and south had been vastly different since the earliest colonial days. The climate of the south was conducive to crops and sprawling plantations, while the fast-moving rivers of the north powered machinery and gradual industrialisation.

### Home life

The average family's home during this period was extremely modest. Most had dirt floors, children would share beds and kitchens were used for both preparing food and warming the house – until the invention and patent of the cast-iron stove in the 1830s cooking was almost always done in an open hearth. Bathtubs were nearly unknown at the time.

### A hard-knock life

Life was particularly difficult for children, who from the ages of just six or eight would be expected to be up before dawn to complete tasks necessary for day-to-day life. Boys would chop wood, make repairs, hunt for food and tend to farm animals, while girls would spend long days cooking, cleaning, sewing and caring for young and elderly family members.

### Getting ahead

The relationship between settlers and Native Americans was tense for many years, and for a long time into the 19th century white Americans feared the so-called 'savages', with local authorities often placing handsome bounties on the scalps of natives.




*1817 – 1825*

# James Monroe

## James Monroe swept into the presidency based on his heroic acts in the Revolutionary War, but his time in office was dubbed the 'Era of Good Feelings'

After George Washington, James Monroe might be the most 'named-after' president. His name adorns 17 counties, two US cities, and one foreign capital city.

His life began on a plantation in Virginia. When Monroe was 16, his father died and he inherited the land and slaves. He left plantation life to enrol at the College of William and Mary, which was gripped by revolutionary fervour. He gained notoriety when he and a handful fellow students launched a raid on the Virginia Royal Governor's mansion and secured hundreds of rifles to arm the local militia. In the Revolutionary War, Monroe played a starring role in the Battle of Trenton. In 1776, the depleted band of revolutionaries led by George Washington had suffered multiple military defeats and was down to 3,000 men. Washington famously ordered the force to cross the Delaware river and march through a nor'easter snowstorm to take on the mercenary Hessians. Monroe and his battalion rushed through artillery fire to disable damaging grapeshot cannons. Monroe took a musket ball to the shoulder and suffered a severed artery in the attack, usually a fatal wound at that time, yet he recovered fully.

After the war, Monroe practiced law. He was not particularly interested in the profession,

but he pursued a degree because he saw it as the best path to wealth and political standing. George Washington appointed him minister to France in 1794, where he attempted to curry favour with revolutionary France. In this task he failed, as the French sensed that the United States was friendlier with the United Kingdom (their wartime enemies at the time), and Monroe was humiliatingly stripped of his post. In 1801, President Jefferson again sent Monroe to France to negotiate the Louisiana Purchase, and he succeeded in securing the gigantic tract land from Napoleon. Later, as governor of Virginia, Monroe brutally suppressed Gabriel's Rebellion, hanging dozens of suspected rebellious slaves. This experience would inform his feelings on sending freedmen back to Africa.

Monroe became America's fifth president in 1817, winning a near-unanimous vote after the opposition Federalist party failed to name a candidate. Monroe's reputation as a war hero helped him secure the office after the disastrous War of 1812, in which the British burned down both the White House and the US Capitol.

He sparked a time of relative national unity by making political appointments with no regard for party lines. His popularity was unabated even when the US suffered the financial shock of 1819 and when Missouri failed in a bid for statehood. An amended proposal later saw Missouri enter the Union as a slave state alongside the free state of Maine, with the stipulation that any future states entering the union would be free above latitude 36/30' north. This compromise was uneasy, but nevertheless persisted for more than three decades.

Domestically, Monroe courted controversy when he sent General Andrew Jackson to pursue Seminole Indians well into Spanish territory in Florida. During the war of 1812, the invading British forces armed and trained thousands of Seminoles. After the war, the Seminoles continued harassing American sailors, prompting Monroe to retaliate. General Jackson interpreted his orders liberally, pursuing the Seminoles deep into Spanish territory. His brutal actions in crushing the Seminoles prompted a congressional inquest, but Monroe scuppered the investigation. Despite the incursion, Spain agreed to sell Florida to the United States.

Monroe's lasting achievement was his eponymous doctrine, a resounding statement of American hegemony in the Western Hemisphere. It was not a statement of his exclusive creation however; he was inspired by the latent American isolationism that had underscored the nation's creation, and Secretary of State John Quincy Adams is acknowledged to have been the sole author of the non-colonialisation provision. Yet Monroe took the initiative (with British support) to declare that the Americas would be henceforth free of European intervention.

A lifelong slave owner, Monroe is not remembered for his charity. He regularly split up families and sold off troublesome slaves. He successfully realised his dream of being a large plantation owner, but he never administered it directly. His plantation floundered, and his deputies drove the slaves harshly to extract money from the land. He suffered from financial difficulties after his retirement owing to his lavish lifestyle, and like Jefferson, he sold slaves rather than freeing them after his death. One of Monroe's curious projects was his desire to relocate free American blacks to Africa. This was not an idea born of benevolence, but rather a fear that a large population of freemen would inspire slaves to rebel. The American Colonization Society brought together an odd coalition of Quaker and evangelical abolitionists and slave owners who opposed abolition, but saw a benefit in the removal of free blacks. Monroe was a sponsor and founding member of the society, and he lobbied congress to financially support the venture. In the end, 30,000 free blacks migrated to what is now Liberia. He remains the only president to have a foreign capital – Monrovia – named after him.

> For five months in 1814-15, Monroe served simultaneously as secretary of state and secretary of war

## The Monroe Doctrine

James Monroe's most lasting contribution to American foreign policy was the doctrine which bears his name (although it wasn't called that until the 1850s). In collaboration with the British, who were interested in shackling colonial Spain, the Monroe Doctrine was a three-pronged statement of intent: no further European colonisation in the New World would be permitted, the US would abstain from involvement in European affairs, and European nations would be prohibited from meddling with governments in the Western hemisphere.





James Monroe was a firm believer in the slave trade, with dreams of becoming a large plantation owner, which he achieved

## Life in the time of James Monroe

### Good Feelings abound

The Era of Good Feelings followed the failure of the Federalist Party, which was the principal opposition to Monroe's Democratic-Republicans. For a brief period, political parties had little effect on American politics. Monroe's administration is fondly remembered, as he avoided major conflicts and expanded the country peacefully.

### A lasting compromise

The Missouri Compromise provided a simple rule for determining whether an incoming state would be free or slave-owning. Inevitably, the compromise was complicated when westward expansion rendered the fixed latitude system unworkable, but it placated both sides while it lasted.

### Violent incursions into Florida

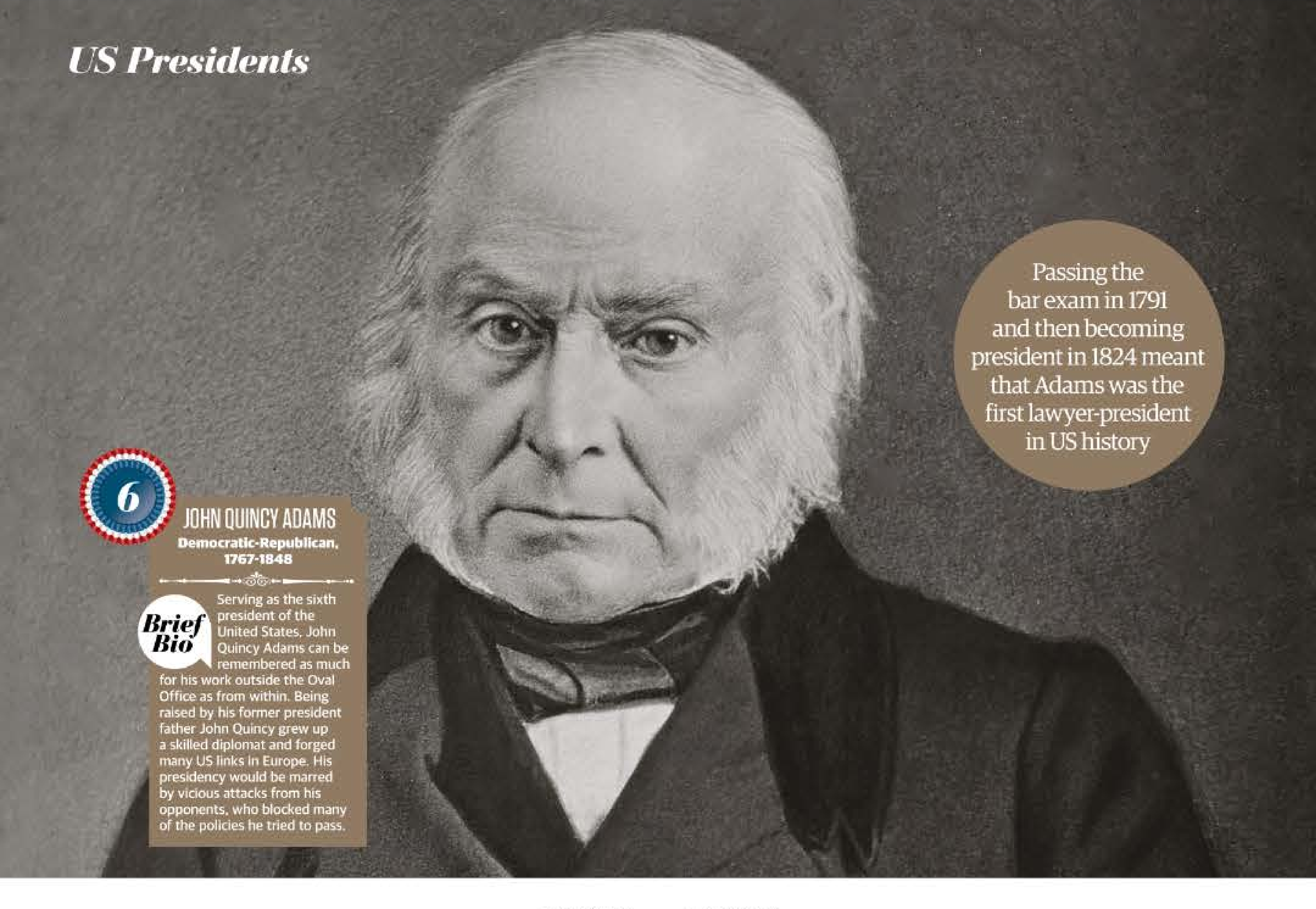
James Monroe believed that Native Americans should progress from a hunter-gatherer to an agrarian civilisation, but his strategy to assimilate them was derailed when his general Andrew Jackson brutally suppressed the Seminoles in Spanish Florida.

### Looking eastward

American politics were dominated by relations with France and the UK, with each enjoying periodic favour in Washington. Monroe's friendliness to France caused him to be denounced by opponents as a French agent and a traitor.

### Fears of slave rebellions

As Virginia governor, Monroe was targeted in a gigantic slave rebellion which failed to fully materialise. Nevertheless, the fear of such an event informed his future thoughts on slaves and his advocacy of the freedmen migration to Liberia.



Passing the bar exam in 1791 and then becoming president in 1824 meant that Adams was the first lawyer-president in US history

6

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

Democratic-Republican, 1767-1848

Brief Bio

Serving as the sixth president of the United States, John Quincy Adams can be remembered as much for his work outside the Oval Office as from within. Being raised by his former president father John Quincy grew up a skilled diplomat and forged many US links in Europe. His presidency would be marred by vicious attacks from his opponents, who blocked many of the policies he tried to pass.

1825 – 1829

# John Quincy Adams

## A well-meaning president whose private life often overshadowed his term in office

John Quincy Adams was arguably the best prepared president in US history. Son of Founding Father and president John Adams, he began his political career as a small child. The young John Quincy travelled overseas with his father on a regular basis - first to France and then the Netherlands on diplomatic missions, witnessing first-hand a nation taking its first steps in the world. Settling down for a few years, he studied at Leiden University before setting off again, this time to Russia with Francis Dana to obtain recognition for the United States, aged just 14. His travels were not over yet, however, and he spent time in Denmark, Finland and Sweden, where he became fluent in French and Dutch. Upon his return he studied at Harvard and became a practising attorney in Boston, after passing the bar exam in 1791.

Initially a member of the Federalist party like his father, he wasn't always willing to toe the party line. He would vote for policies that he personally supported - like the Louisiana Purchase and Jefferson's Embargo Act - that the party was against. In 1808, he left the Federalists and joined the Democratic-Republican Party.


A map showing the results of the 1824 presidential election, which was won by John Quincy Adams

After a youth spent amongst the political circles in Europe, Adams had amassed a very impressive public service record. One action that would stand out above all of others was his crafting of the Monroe Doctrine in 1823. After the Napoleonic Wars had ended, several countries in Latin America revolted against their former masters and declared independence. The Monroe Doctrine stated that the United States would block any European countries attempting to stop these independence movements. While the document made large claims, it was largely disregarded internationally as the US, a fledgling country, did not have the political or military power to back it up. What saved it was that it fell in line with Britain's larger Pax Britannica to enforce neutrality on the seas. This is a document that was to have a long reaching legacy as many in the US have used the Monroe Doctrine to justify intervention in Latin America during the 19th and 20th centuries.

In the election of 1824, despite losing the popular vote to Democrat Andrew Jackson, John Quincy Adams was elected as president. After no majority could be reached in the Electoral College, Henry Clay put his votes behind John Quincy, a move that outraged Jackson and caused him to decry this "corrupt bargain".

As it turned out, Adams had inherited a lot of his father's temperament. He was stubborn, aloof, independent and ferocious in his convictions. These traits would not set him in good stead for making political alliances both within his own party and outside it. Indeed the odds seemed to be stacked against him as his numerous political opponents were set on making him a one term president.

Adams was a talented linguist; he was fluent in French, Dutch, Greek and Latin, and proficient in German

To his credit, the proposals Adams set out were ambitious and far reaching. These included building a network of canals and highways that would connect different sections of the country together; a full survey of the entire US coastline; the acquisition of public land for conservation efforts and building astronomical observatories. Adams believed that these policies would help foster an enterprising spirit of commerce and scientific thought. In addition, he also proposed solutions to universal problems, such as the establishment of a uniformed system of weights and measures.

Although he wasn't short of grand ideas, the reality of Adams' term was very different. Many people found his proposals completely unrealistic for a young America to act upon. His political opponents seized on them to heap scorn and disdain on the new president, sensing that he had pushed for these policies to help grow the power and influence of the Federal Government. This in turn led to accusations of elitism and neglect of the common man. At the head of the opposition was the slighted Andrew Jackson, who managed to have his allies win majorities in both Houses of Congress. With this in place it was almost impossible for Adams to pass any of his legislation, and for what little he did get through, the funding supplied fell woefully short.

Struggling through his four-year term, John Quincy Adams was soundly beaten in the 1828 election. It was a bitter and personal fight with both sides becoming ruthless. A low point was reached when Jackson's wife was accused of bigamy. Nevertheless, after the defeat, Adams entered the House of Representatives and enjoyed a long political career.

In 1848, Adams made his final contribution to his country. He had taken to the floor of the House of Representatives to argue that veterans who served in the Mexican-American war should be honoured by the government. Interestingly, he was against the war but saw the US government as obligated to honour the men who had put their lives on the line. During his speech, he suffered a massive cerebral haemorrhage. He passed away two days later on 23 February 1848. Surrounded by his family he uttered his last words: "This is the last of Earth. I am content."

## Victories in the slave trade

Throughout his life, Adams would put his long-standing anti-slavery sentiment into action. He held that slavery was a terrible evil and preached its total abolition. His first victory came when he ruled that petitions against slavery be heard in the House despite a 'gag rule' saying they could not. In later life, Adams would champion a case which saw slaves who mutinied against their Spanish masters be freed, which went against the government line of deportation. As well as winning the men's freedom, Adams never took a fee for fighting that case and used it as a platform to preach the evils of slavery to a wide audience.




This portrait of John Quincy Adams was created posthumously by GPA Healy around the year 1858

## Life in the time of John Quincy Adams

### Slavery was legal

Before the civil war slavery was legal in all parts of America and even the Founding Fathers and first five presidents owned at least one slave. It was not until the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863 that it became illegal.

### A melting pot

The New World was still calling people from far and wide to its shores. You could find people of Dutch, Irish, Scottish, English, French, German and Spanish descent, as well as many other nationalities, on American soil.

### A new country

In the early 19th century, much of the American West was still unclaimed and free. It would stay this way until the late 1840s, when the promise of gold started to lure more and more adventurers into the wild.

### Pistols at dawn

Duelling was a popular way to settle disputes between disenfranchised gentlemen at this time. One famous duel between politicians Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr sparked many sermons moving to have the practice abolished as Hamilton was mortally wounded by a pistol shot.

### The White House

The iconic residence and primary work space for the president was completed in 1800. Before its construction, the presidents had stayed in a number of cities including New York and Pennsylvania. However, the building had to be partially rebuilt in 1814 as marauding British troops set fire to it and destroyed much of the interior.

1829 – 1837

# Andrew Jackson

## A crack shot, serial duellist and war hero, 'Old Hickory' was probably the toughest president the US has ever seen

When Jackson was born on the western frontier of the Carolinas, the 13 American colonies were still part of the British Empire. The War of Independence that began eight years later was to be one of the formative events of his life. The other major influence on Jackson was his location at the frontier; he was always in a sense a frontiersman, and in time he was to become the champion and embodiment of all those Americans living at the rough edge of things.

Jackson's childhood was hard from the beginning. His father died before he was born and his family was poor. The rest of Jackson's immediate family died during the war, leaving him a tough orphan and veteran at the age of 15. He blamed the British for the loss of his family, but that was not the sole cause of his lasting hatred for them. The fighting in the Carolinas was particularly savage, with guerrilla-style tactics being employed on both sides. It is said that when Jackson and one of his brothers were captured while serving with a troop of irregular soldiers - both were too young to serve in the regular army - a British officer commanded him to clean his muddy boots and then beat him with a sabre when he refused. Jackson reputedly bore the physical scars for the rest of his life, while the emotional effects were evident in his tendency to hold a grudge.

A defining characteristic of Jackson was his 'with him or against him' attitude. If you were on his side, he could be a loyal friend and comrade, but if you opposed him, then God help you. For one thing, Jackson was a notorious and successful duellist. This approach extended from the personal sphere into his wider attitudes: you were either 'his' people, or you weren't, and he was ruthless and cruel to those on the other side.

Jackson fought a number of duels and was shot at least three times - in the chest, arm and shoulder

By the time Jackson was a young man making his fortune in the new territories west of the Appalachian mountains, his qualities were already obvious, most notably self-reliance, intelligence and deadly - some would say murderous - determination. Having studied law, he qualified for the bar in 1787 and quickly set up in Nashville, then a small town in what was shortly to become the new state of Tennessee. Wealth, reputation and political influence rapidly followed. Not all of Jackson's new acquisitions were admirable; he became a slave owner and remained an unapologetic defender of the American South's 'peculiar institution' throughout his life. It may be that this attitude sat comfortably with his 'us and them' view of the world, although of course it was not unusual in that time and place.

Jackson met his wife, Rachel Donelson Robards, not long after his arrival in Nashville. It was a genuine love match and the couple remained devoted, but Rachel was already married when they met and the circumstances of their marriage were to be used to stir up controversy and slander later on, when Jackson fought for the presidency.



7

**ANDREW JACKSON**
**Democrat, 1767 - 1845**

*Brief Bio*

A no-nonsense frontiersman from a humble background, Jackson was also a lawyer, judge, businessman, congressman, senator and general before becoming a controversial but enormously popular president, serving two terms. He was one of the original American 'self-made men', the first 'western' president, and he changed the way politics was done in the young republic.



Jackson's wife Rachel Donelson died just days after he was elected in 1828

# Life in the time of Andrew Jackson

## An American continent

Although the term 'Manifest Destiny' wasn't coined until 1845, the year in which Jackson died, it expressed the principle of US expansion throughout North America that he supported. The notion that it was the duty and destiny of the United States to spread its special republic helped justify ruthless and sometimes brutal territorial growth.

## The Trail of Tears

The Indian Removal Act of 1830 was part of a move to expel Native Americans from the southeastern United States, pushing them westward. It was motivated by the desire for new land. In 1838, the Cherokee were forcibly removed from their lands in Georgia and, ill-equipped for a winter journey, thousands died.

## Courting popularity

Until Jackson came along, it wasn't the custom to actively campaign for the presidency; electors were supposed to make a rational choice based on qualifications. Even if there was some humbug in this and mudslinging was nothing new, the 1828 election changed how things were done. It was also one of the dirtiest in US history.

## The spoils of victory

In the 'spoils system' (which is still in practice to this day), new presidents appointed their own people to government posts, replacing the office holders appointed by their predecessors. The phrase "to the victor belong the spoils" was coined in justification of Jackson's appointments. In fact, he was fairly moderate in his patronage.

## Cooking up policy

The term 'kitchen cabinet' was first used to describe Jackson's informal group of advisers, aiding and advising him in parallel to his official government cabinet. The phrase is still used to describe informal or personal government and is still mostly meant critically.

## The War of 1812

Men like Jackson may have welcomed the war as an opportunity for personal glory and the expansion of US territory - and perhaps vengeance against the hated British - but it was not universally popular. Economically, it was disastrous for maritime trading states on the seaboard, while not all Americans viewed Britain with hostility. After the invasion of Canada proved disappointingly inconclusive and Washington DC and the White House were burned by British troops, enthusiasm for the war ebbed - especially in areas affected by the ruinous naval blockade. The defeat of Napoleon in Europe could only mean more British forces on the way. In fact, the Treaty of Ghent was signed late in 1814, ending hostilities, and a war that had been a small sideshow in world affairs drew to a close - almost. From an American perspective, the most significant action was still to come. News of the treaty had yet to arrive in the US and the battle for New Orleans was fought on and off in December 1814 and January 1815, with the main British assault beginning on 8 January. The improbable American victory in the Battle of New Orleans not only established Jackson as a national figure - momentous enough - it did much to restore unity and national feeling.


Jackson leads the American forces at the Battle of New Orleans in 1815

This caused him particular pain, even if it did not stop his ambitions.

Jackson's political rise began in earnest as Tennessee's statehood approached in 1796. In rapid succession, he was a delegate at the state constitutional convention, became the state's first Congressman and was elected to the Senate. Jackson hated his time in Washington and left his posts in disgust. The scholarly, gentlemanly, cliquish politicians in the capital were definitely not 'us' for him, and he viewed them with deep suspicion. Sometimes this attitude is explained as Jackson's dislike of the wealthy in favour of ordinary people, but in fact much of his early legal practice revolved around debt collection, and he won friends and allies among rich creditors in Tennessee while consistently opposing debt relief measures. He also built a considerable fortune for himself. It seems possible that his real dislike was for 'old money' and the social and intellectual pretensions of the old elite, in some ways unchanged since the revolution.

Back in Nashville, Jackson was soon appointed as a judge of the Tennessee Supreme Court, where he served for six years. In 1802, he was elected major general of the state militia, which was to open the way to his greater ambitions, turning him into a national figure a decade later. Many Americans were unhappy when war broke out between the United States and Great Britain in 1812, but Jackson was not one of them. Even before it was declared, he was recruiting new militia volunteers for a future attack on Canada. Although he never made it anywhere near Canada, Jackson would certainly never regret how things turned out.

> Jackson survived an assassination attempt in 1835 after both his assailant's pistols misfired. The odds against a double misfire were astronomical


The Battle of Horseshoe Bend resulted in an overwhelming victory for Jackson and his forces over the Creek Native Americans

The government was slow to call on Jackson and his militia, and his first action was against the Creek Nation Native Americans, who were allied with the British. After around five months' campaigning over 1813-14, the decisive and bloody Battle of Tohopeka (also known as Horseshoe Bend) ended the threat from the Creeks, who suffered terrible losses. Jackson then moved against the Spanish territory of Florida, without orders. The pretext was that Spain was Britain's ally against France in Europe. In fact, he wanted the territory. His early focus on Canada and his interest in Florida reflected one of his most important political positions - he believed that there was no room for anywhere but the United States in North America, and by that he meant total domination of the continent by white Americans. The British,



### *Defining moment*
### Jackson shoots and is shot
**1806**

In 1806, Jackson got into a quarrel with Charles Dickinson, another keen duellist and a famously good shot. Dickinson fired first and Jackson was hit in the chest, near the heart, with some ribs broken. Jackson gathered himself and then coolly shot his opponent, after re-cocking his pistol when it didn't cock fully. Although he was allowed to do this according to the rules of engagement, it was frowned upon, and the incident both enhanced and damaged Jackson's reputation - tough but lacking in magnanimity. The chest wound troubled Jackson severely for the rest of his life.

## *Timeline*

1767

- **Shots are fired**
Hostilities commence at the Battles of Lexington and Concord, with British troops forced back to retreat to their base by colonial militia. The American Revolutionary War had begun and a year later the Declaration of Independence would be signed.
**1775**



- **First sign-up**
The thirteen-year-old Andrew Jackson signs up with the revolutionary militia in the Carolinas as he is not old enough to officially register. He and one of his brothers act as couriers and are later captured by the British.
**1780**

- **Joining the bar**
After studying law in Salisbury, North Carolina, Jackson is admitted to the state bar. Practising law formed the first part of his career, although he would shortly move west to pursue his burgeoning political ambitions.
**1787**

- **Tennessee becomes a state**
Jackson moved to Tennessee eight years before it became a state and it would become his political base and his home. A prominent figure, Jackson sat on its constitutional convention.
**1796**

- **War breaks out**
As major general of the Tennessee militia, Jackson fights the British and the Red Sticks, forging his reputation as an adept commander and notoriously feisty leader. His successes lead him to become a national figure.
**1812**

Spanish and French had to leave, and the Native Americans were to be moved ruthlessly westward.

Having stirred up trouble in Florida, Jackson shadowed a British army to New Orleans, where he was to make his name. Among the defenders of the city who Jackson assembled were some pirates, which raised a few eyebrows; however, he probably had more in common with them than the Washington stuffed shirts he loathed. The decisive factor in the Battle of New Orleans may well have been a British logistical failure - the ladders for scaling the ramparts didn't arrive, leaving the soldiers stuck below the American guns to be slaughtered - but Jackson took the credit and was instantly a hero.

After another highly questionable attack on Florida in 1817 as the military commander of the southern district, Jackson's attention turned to the presidency, and in 1822 the Tennessee legislature nominated him as their presidential candidate. The election of 1824 left Jackson more of an angry outsider than ever. He received the most votes of the four candidates, but no one had the required majority, so the decision went to the House of Representatives, who chose John Quincy Adams, a Washington insider and one of 'them'.

In 1828 Jackson not only revenged himself on Adams with an emphatic election victory, he was also instrumental, together with his allies, in forming the modern Democratic Party. He was to serve two terms, being re-elected in 1832. This was a new style of politics, with a new power base, populist in the old states and with a strong influence from the new western territories. The previous six presidents had been scholars, philosophers and statesmen from the most prestigious old colonies; they had broad political experience and a grounding in the principles of government. They believed that it would and should always be them who guided America. Jackson, the first to have been born into poverty, was more direct and rarely quibbled about laws or philosophical principles when he could act instead - he had a vigorous, rambunctious style, used the presidential veto often, and generally expanded the role of the president. This was what was to become known as 'Jacksonian Democracy', and it changed American politics forever.

Even if it was the manner of Jackson's presidency that was to leave an enduring legacy, there were notable actions too. In his first term, Jackson squashed a threat to federal authority from South Carolina, but then failed to enforce a Supreme Court decision against Georgia. The state had appropriated nine million acres of Cherokee land that lay within its borders after gold was discovered there. The Cherokees appealed to the US Supreme Court and won, but then the president refused to act. This was to end in the forcible evacuation of around 15,000 Cherokees, on foot, leading to the death of around a quarter of them: the 'Trail of Tears'. Jackson's differing reactions to state defiance were telling.

During the 1812 war Jackson's men nicknamed him 'Old Hickory' because of his toughness - the name stuck

In Jackson's second term he failed to renew the national bank's charter; Jacksonian Democrats were suspicious of old elite vested interests, and the president himself had been affronted by political manoeuvring to force his hand in the matter. Effectively, he killed the US bank. This almost certainly caused the disastrous 'Panic of 1837', a financial crisis followed by a lengthy recession. This decision of Jackson's was a clear failure and discredited his party's anti-central bank stand.

His retirement was largely quiet and full of honours, with Jackson never losing his popularity; as ever, he was lucky and had left office by the time of the financial crash. There were certainly qualities to admire in him, but they were mixed with darker elements. He had the frontier virtues and vices, being capable, resourceful and courageous, but casually violent and careless of the rights - and lives - of Native Americans. In some ways, it is easier to say what he was against than what he was for: the British, old money and 'gentlemen', anyone in the North American continent who wasn't a white US citizen, central banks and anyone who crossed him. It is fitting to repeat the Earl of Clarendon's judgement on Oliver Cromwell, who also emerged from relative obscurity in wartime: "as he had all the wickedness against which damnation is denounced...so he had some virtues which have caused the memory of some men in all ages to be celebrated; and he will be looked upon by posterity as a brave bad man".

"He had a vigorous, rambunctious style and used the presidential veto often"

## *Defining moment*

### The Battle of Tohopeka
**1814**

Also known as the Battle of Horseshoe Bend, this was the final and decisive engagement of Jackson's campaign against the Red Sticks (Upper Creeks), part of the Creek Nation, during the War of 1812. It was notably bloody. The US forces numbered a little over 3,000, including some Native American allies. Against them were around 1,000 Red Stick warriors in a strong fortified position. Jackson had his men surround the fortifications and after an ineffectual preliminary bombardment they mounted a hand-to-hand assault. Jackson's forces took only light casualties, but approximately 800 Red Sticks were killed. The treaty that Jackson then forced on them was devastating.

## *Defining moment*

### A "corrupt bargain"?
**1824**

There were four presidential candidates in 1824: Andrew Jackson, John Quincy Adams (son of second US president, John Adams), William H Crawford and Henry Clay. All except Jackson were Washington 'insiders'. Jackson received the largest percentage of the popular vote and the most electoral college votes (41.4 per cent and 99), with Adams coming a decent second (30.9 per cent and 84). With no one receiving the required majority, the House of Representatives had to choose from the three highest-polling candidates. The fourth candidate, Clay, supported Adams, who won. Clay was then made secretary of state, leading to accusations of a "corrupt bargain" from Jackson.



John Quincy Adams was Jackson's opponent in two bitterly contested presidential elections



**First-time president**
Running against the incumbent, John Quincy Adams, Jackson wins a healthy majority of the popular and electoral college votes: 56 per cent and 178 versus 43.6 per cent and 83 to become president for the first time.
**1828**

**President again**
After a successful first term, Jackson is re-elected with a slightly reduced share of the popular vote (54.2 per cent), but with hugely increased support from the electoral college (219 votes).
**1832**

**The national debt is paid off**
In 1835, Jackson finally succeeded in paying off the national debt, one of his major long-term ambitions as president. It was a singular feat and spoke of his ingrained hatred of debt.
**1835**

**Financial panic sweeps the nation**
There were many causes of the financial crash, but Jackson's 'killing' of the US bank was almost certainly one of them. However, he was no longer president and managed to escape the consequences.
**1837**

1845

**An unlikely death**
Surprisingly, Jackson died a peaceful death, despite living a life full of fights, duels, shootings and an assassination attempt. He died at his plantation home in Tennessee, known as the Hermitage.
**1845**




Martin Van Buren spoke Dutch at home, and is the only president who spoke English as a second language

## 1837 – 1841

# Martin Van Buren

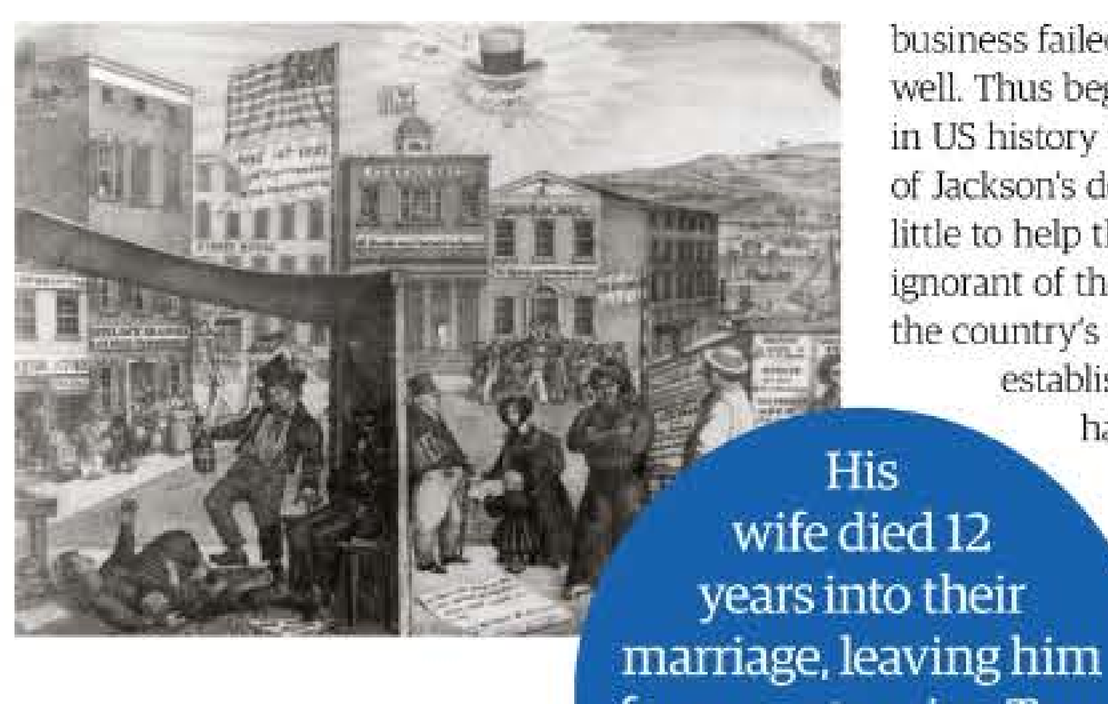
He was nicknamed 'Martin Van Ruin' by his critics, but Van Buren helped to lay the foundations of politics as we know them today

The two happiest days of Martin Van Buren's life were, according to the eighth president of the United States, "those of my entrance upon the office and my surrender of it" - perhaps an unsurprising sentiment, since his single term in office was fraught with challenges.

Van Buren, of Dutch descent, was born at the end of 1782 to a family of modest means. His father was a tavern keeper in Kinderhook, New York. His father's premises were frequently used for local government gatherings, giving Van Buren his first taste of politics. The family couldn't afford to send him to college, but he managed to get an apprenticeship in a law office and began studying law independently. He became a lawyer, joined the Democratic-Republican Party and began his career as a minor county official.

Small in stature but impeccably well-dressed and presented, Van Buren quickly demonstrated the qualities that would take him to the very top of American politics. He negotiated the fractious political environment of New York and built a political organisation that stressed unity and loyalty to Jeffersonian principles, which favoured states' rights over a strong federal government.

Gradually, he made his way from the New York State Senate to the New York attorney general's office and then to the US senate. Van Buren disagreed with the politics of president John Quincy Adams - who'd won a contentious election in 1824 - and so he helped form a coalition of Jeffersonian Republicans, backing war hero Andrew Jackson in the 1828 election. This coalition emerged as a brand-new political entity: the Democratic



Party. Jackson won the election, and rewarded Van Buren for his support and loyalty by appointing him secretary of state, referring to him as "a true man with no guile". Though he resigned as part of a cabinet reshuffle in 1831, Van Buren became minister to Britain. Then in 1832 Van Buren earned the Democrat's first nomination as vice president, where he ran with Jackson on a platform that strongly opposed the recharter of the Bank of the United States. The Democratic Party easily defeated the opposing Whig Party, and Jackson would pick Van Buren as his presidential successor four years later.

Van Buren took office in 1836, he used his inaugural address to hold the then-prosperous United States up as an example to the rest of the world. But just three months later, the country was gripped by The Panic of 1837 - the worst financial crisis that the US had ever seen at that point.

The 19th century cyclical economy of 'boom and bust' was nothing new, but financial measures implemented by Jackson had put extra strain on the economy's pattern. Having closed the Second Bank of the United States, restrictions on inflationary practices had been removed for some banks and wild speculation about land - based on easy bank credit - had swept across the country. To counteract this, Jackson issued a Specie Circular in 1836, requiring land to be purchased with hard money. People panicked. Hundreds of banks and business failed, and thousands lost their lands as well. Thus began five years of the worst depression in US history to date, and Van Buren's continuation of Jackson's deflationary money policies did little to help the situation. But he wasn't entirely ignorant of the issue, and in an attempt to confront the country's economic woes he proposed the establishment of an independent treasury to handle the federal funds that had been passed to state banks, and cut off federal expenditures so completely the government was forced to sell the tools it had used on public works.

His wife died 12 years into their marriage, leaving him four sons to raise. Two went on to become his personal secretaries

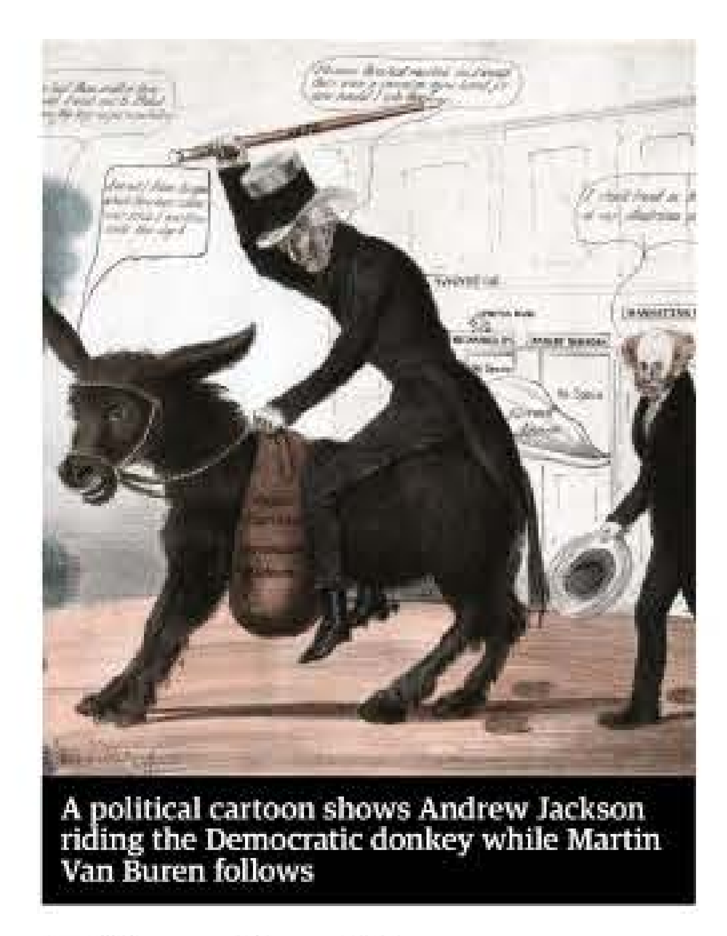
The measures passed Congress, although a bitter debate drove many of the more conservative democrats into the opposing Whig Party. Meanwhile, Van Buren was dealing with a number of other divisive issues: the annexing of Texas, which he was against; the growing tensions between the US and Great Britain over the Canadian border, where his measured approach only earned him the resentment of those demanding more aggression; and a long war against Florida's Seminole tribe.

Given these challenges, it's little surprise that Van Buren lost his re-election bid in 1840, and in 1844 he tried and failed to gain the Democratic presidential nomination. Come 1848, he ran as candidate for president for the Free Soil party - a short-lived group comprising former Democrats and anti-slavery members of the Whig Party. He received just 10 per cent of the vote, and failed to win a single state.

Martin Van Buren spent much of the rest of his days travelling, before returning home to Kinderhook to write his memoirs. He died in 1862, aged 79, and while his presidency was troubled, it should not be overshadowed by the considerable contribution he made to American political development. Playing a key role in the creation of the Democratic Party and the 'second-party system', Van Buren left a permanent mark on American politics.




A map showing the result of the 1832 presidential election, won by Andrew Jackson. Van Buren was Jackson's running mate



A political cartoon shows Andrew Jackson riding the Democratic donkey while Martin Van Buren follows

## Life in the time of Martin Van Buren

### The US expands

Texas was incorporated into the United States in 1845, and while the majority of Texans were in favour of the annexation, political leaders from both major parties had concerns about introducing the vast slave-holding region into an already volatile political climate.

### Financial ruin for many

Almost the entire country felt the effects of the Panic of 1837. Out of 850 banks in the US, 343 closed entirely and 62 failed partially. Unemployment levels were as high as 25 per cent in some areas.

### Transportation was revolutionised

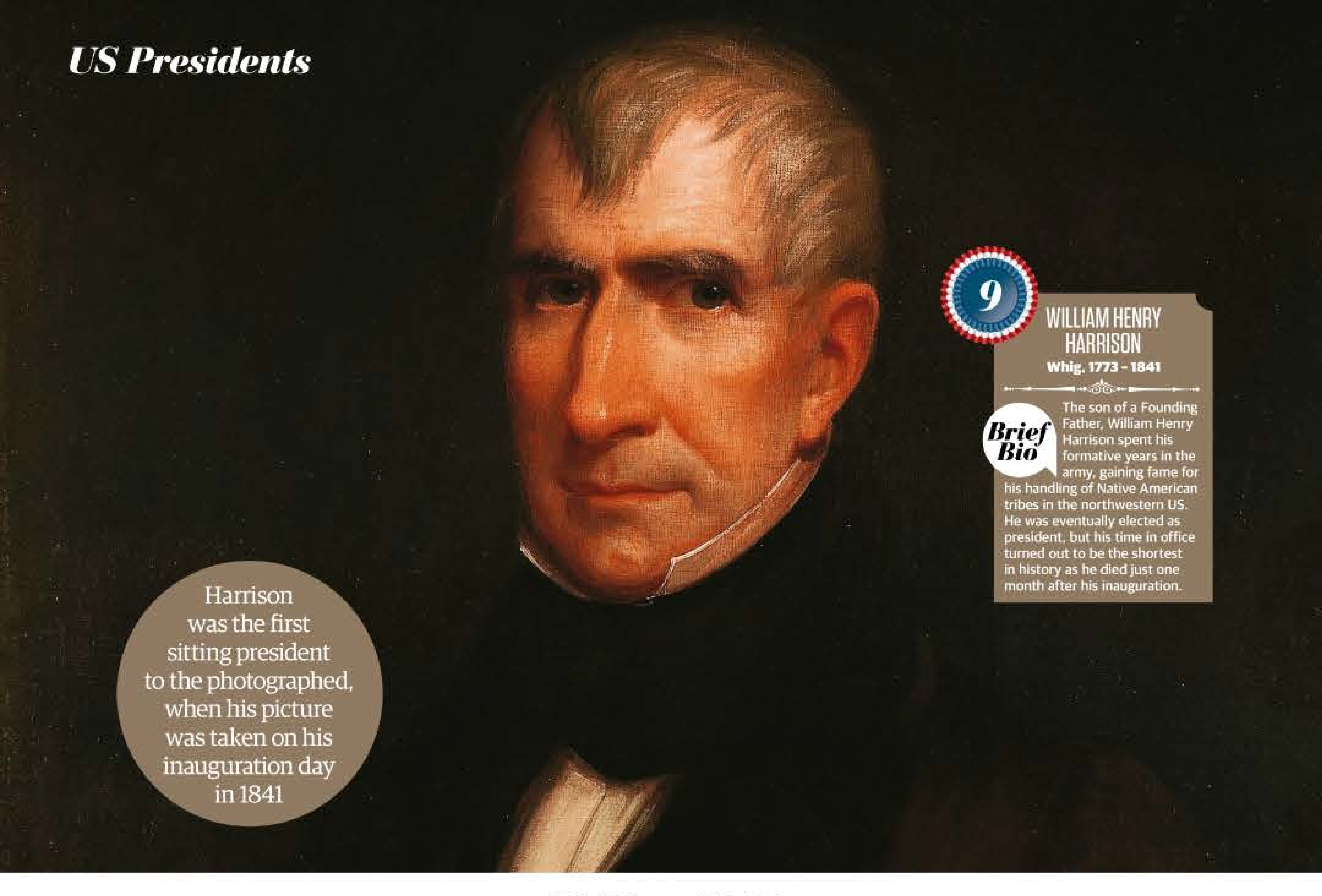
Construction on the 584km Erie Canal began in 1817, heralding the first transportation system between the eastern seaboard (New York City) and the western interior (Great Lakes) that didn't require portage. It was considerably faster than carts pulled by animals and cut transport costs significantly.

### The Mormon War

After Joseph Smith organised the Church of Latter Day Saints in 1830, he revealed the Second Coming of Christ was near, and urged his followers to relocate to a town in Missouri. Tensions rose between the Mormons and the town's original settlers, and war broke out, killing many. As a result, around 10,000 Mormons were forced to relocate to Illinois.

### The divisive issue

Slavery was a hotly-debated political issue at the time, with southern slave owners at odds with northern abolitionists. Van Buren made significant strides in anti-slavery frameworks during his lifetime, and slavery was outlawed throughout the entirety of the US just three years after his death.




Harrison was the first sitting president to the photographed, when his picture was taken on his inauguration day in 1841

1841 – 1841

# William Henry Harrison

## Serving the shortest presidential term, Harrison's legacy lies in his military and political campaigning tactics

William's father Benjamin signed the Declaration of Independence and was governor of Virginia during the 1780s. His mother Elizabeth descended from one of the Virginia colonies' earliest and most prestigious families. As the youngest of seven children with little prospect of inheriting his family's plantation, Benjamin decided that William's future was to become a doctor, and sent him to Pennsylvania to study medicine. When his father died in 1791, the eighteen-year-old William fulfilled his dream of joining the military. Using family connections to become an ensign officer in the regular infantry, he proved resourceful by commandeering around eighty roustabouts from the streets of Philadelphia. He enlisted them all and then took them to Fort Washington in the Northwest territory near present-day Cincinnati. On 20 August 1794, at the Battle of Fallen Timbers along the Maumee River in Ohio, his legion defeated tribes of Native Americans which had been supported by the British. This ended the ongoing Northwest Indian War, gaining much of Ohio for American settlers thanks to the Treaty of Greenville.

## The Battle Of Tippecanoe

Tenskwatawa (1771-1836), the brother of Tecumseh, ignored his brother's advice not to attack at the Battle of Tippecanoe, launching a surprise one in the small hours. After two hours of fighting Harrison's forces prevailed, having lost 62 of their 1,000 men to Tenskwatawa's 50 or so men from about 600. The warriors retreated to Prophetstown, refusing Tenskwatawa's encouragements to attack again, and wisely evacuating their families just hours before Harrison showed up and ordered his army to confiscate the town's supplies before putting it - and further hopes of peace - to the torch. Even the dead were exhumed and scalped. For winning this battle, the hero Harrison was nicknamed 'Old Tip'.



By 1800, Harrison had left the military and accepted a position from President Adams as governor of the Indiana Territory of the former Northwest Territory. During the next twelve years he showed great skill in implementing President Adams' chief reason for giving him the job: legally securing as much land as possible from Native Americans. Harrison exploited the tribal chiefs' propensity for poverty, corruption or a weakness for alcohol, to push through seven treaties in which they ceded their lands. The culmination of this came in 1805 when, after hospitable drinks, chiefs of the Sac tribes sold the United States 51 million acres for one cent per two hundred acres. It surely has to rank among the meanest deals ever closed in the land of opportunity, and as white settlers moved onto these new territories, the Native Americans grew more and more incensed.

The situation leading to outright conflict began in September 1809 when Harrison offered to buy three million acres for almost two cents per acre. Tribes named as sole owners of the land were not invited to negotiations, and Tecumseh, a Shawnee chief, began travelling to rally warriors to join him in resisting what he saw as encroachments by settlers. Tecumseh took the traditional Native American view that all lands were communal, and began threatening chiefs who had signed the treaty. When Harrison met with him and his warrior elite on 15 August 1810, the drawing of weapons on both sides and harsh words could have sparked a war right there and then. A year later another meeting took place in which Tecumseh assured peace, earning Harrison's respect as "one of those uncommon geniuses". The mutual goodwill, however, was insufficient to prevent forces from being rallied on both sides, and on 7 November 1811, the Battle of Tippecanoe took place on tribally sacred ground in Indiana at which Harrison's army was victorious. After war broke out with the British and their Native American allies in 1812, and following several battles, major general Harrison of the Northwest forces, defeated the British (as well as killing Tecumseh) at the Battle of the Thames in present day Chatham-Kent, Ontario on 5 October 1813. The boost to American morale, and the now-national reputation of its commander who had scattered the tribes, allowed Harrison to bask in adulation during a banqueting and carousing tour of various northwestern cities. Unfortunately this was to be the summit of Harrison's career, either militarily or politically.

Harrison's life was thereafter an agonisingly drawn-out tragedy magnified by the enduringly poor health of his wife Anna and the death of six of his ten children. The 41 year old then resigned his commission and settled on a farm near Cincinnati, seeking offices for the next quarter-century with a "rabid thirst" as former President John Adams put it. As a congressman, Harrison served two terms between 1816 and 1828, latterly as senator. His ambassadorship to Colombia stumbled, and with mounting debts and out of office, he made whiskey for a short time before renouncing it.

Following a narrowly unsuccessful bid to become president as the Whig candidate in 1836, after losing to Martin Van Buren, his ambition finally paid off in the election of 1840. The incumbent Van Buren was seen as incompetent and lordly, and despite Harrison's aristocratic roots, the Democratic press characterised him as an alcoholic yokel in a log cabin. Untrue as this was, instead of denying it, Harrison's Whigs positively spun the myth into a folksy, humble image for 'Old Tip', and the 'log cabin campaign' which trumpeted his ordinariness and produced the first campaign slogan, "Tippecanoe and Tyler, too". From the 80 per-cent voter turnout Harrison won a landslide in the electoral college, though in the popular vote only six per cent separated him and Van Buren.

At 68, not only was he the oldest person to have been elected president at the time, he was also twice the average American lifespan. Yet almost a month later he was dead. His inauguration was in freezing weather on 4 March 1841, during which he spoke for almost two hours without wearing a coat or hat. This was then followed by a round of receptions in his wet clothes, which seemed foolish, perhaps showing how Harrison felt obliged to live up to his war hero image. Harrison made executive appointments for a few days afterwards, taking them very seriously, before catching a cold which quickly turned into pneumonia and pleurisy. Feeling "harassed by the multitude" of people calling upon him, he was the first president to die in office. Within two decades the Whig party fractured into the existing Democrats and the new Republican party.



Tenskwatawa was one of the Native American leaders that Harrison fought against at the Battle of Tippecanoe

## Life in the time of William Henry Harrison

### Child of the revolution

As the last British subject to become president, and a self-declared 'Child of the Revolution', Harrison was born two years before the American Revolutionary War was ignited by the Battles of Lexington and Concord in Massachusetts.

### The noise maker

Tenskwatawa's ('The Open Door') original name was Lalawethika ('The Noise Maker'). After a series of visions that centred on the idea of the Americans as the spawn of an evil, sea-dwelling 'Great Serpent' from Algonquian tradition, he became 'The Prophet' as his preaching grew more militant.

### Killed by his doctors?

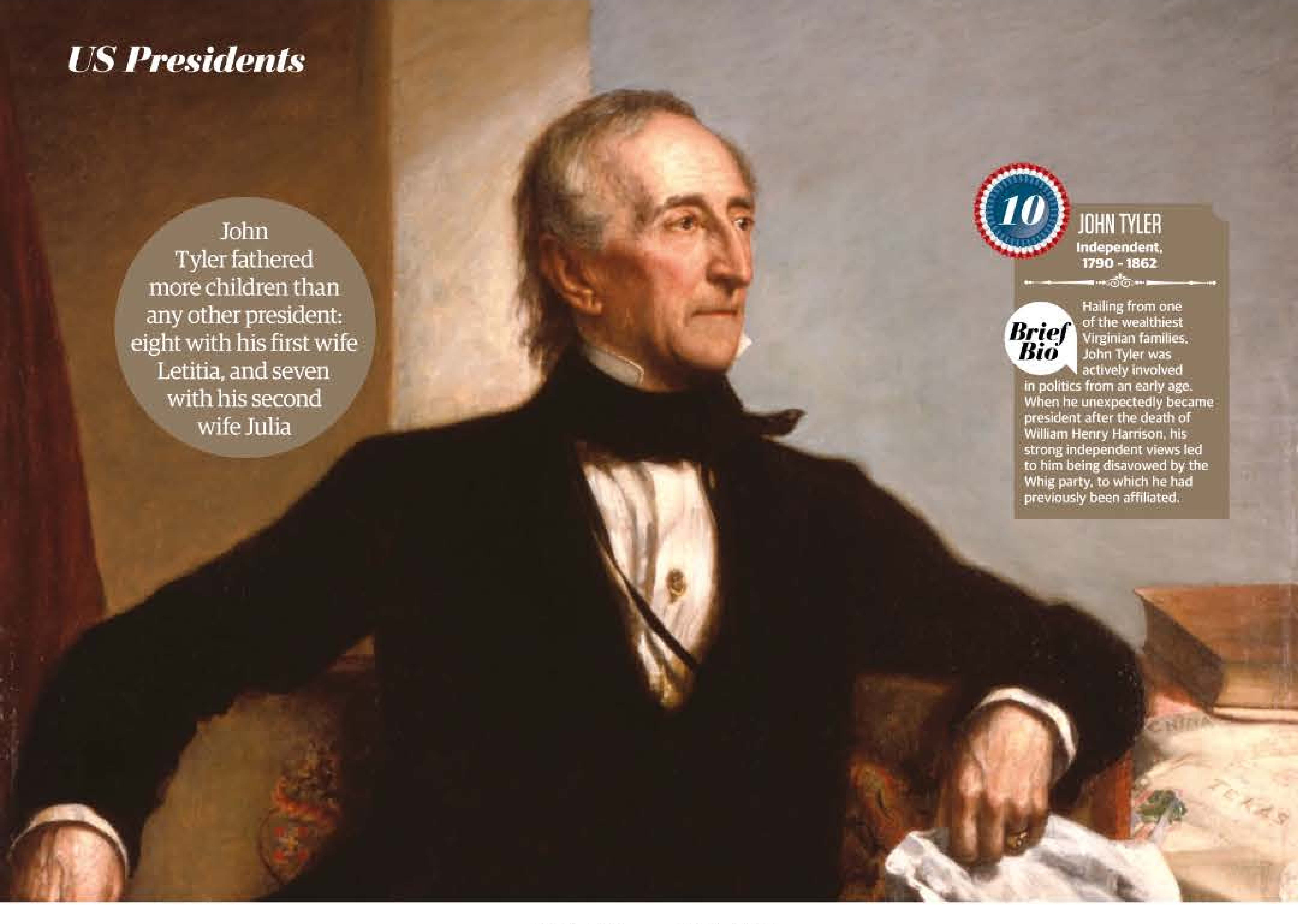
The sick president's cure regime included bleeding, purging, doses of calomel containing poisonous mercury, caster oil, snake weed root, crude petroleum, camphor, brandy, opium, and laudanum. Perhaps unsurprisingly therefore, some historians have blamed this for hastening Harrison's death.

### The zero-year curse

The dying Tenskwatawa supposedly cursed Harrison in the aftermath of the Battle of the Thames in 1813. Every subsequent president elected in a year ending in zero died in office from 1840 until the 1960s, including the four who were assassinated. Ronald Reagan (1911-2004) broke the chain by surviving an assassination attempt, as did George W Bush.

### The president who never really was

Harrison's relevancy is as the predominant soldier and statesman in the emergence of today's Upper Midwest from the former Northwest Territories. His presidency is mostly relevant for preventing the congressional Whigs from consolidating power as a result of his unexpected death.



John Tyler fathered more children than any other president: eight with his first wife Letitia, and seven with his second wife Julia

10

JOHN TYLER
Independent, 1790 - 1862

**Brief Bio**
Hailing from one of the wealthiest Virginian families, John Tyler was actively involved in politics from an early age. When he unexpectedly became president after the death of William Henry Harrison, his strong independent views led to him being disavowed by the Whig party, to which he had previously been affiliated.

*1841 – 1845*

# John Tyler

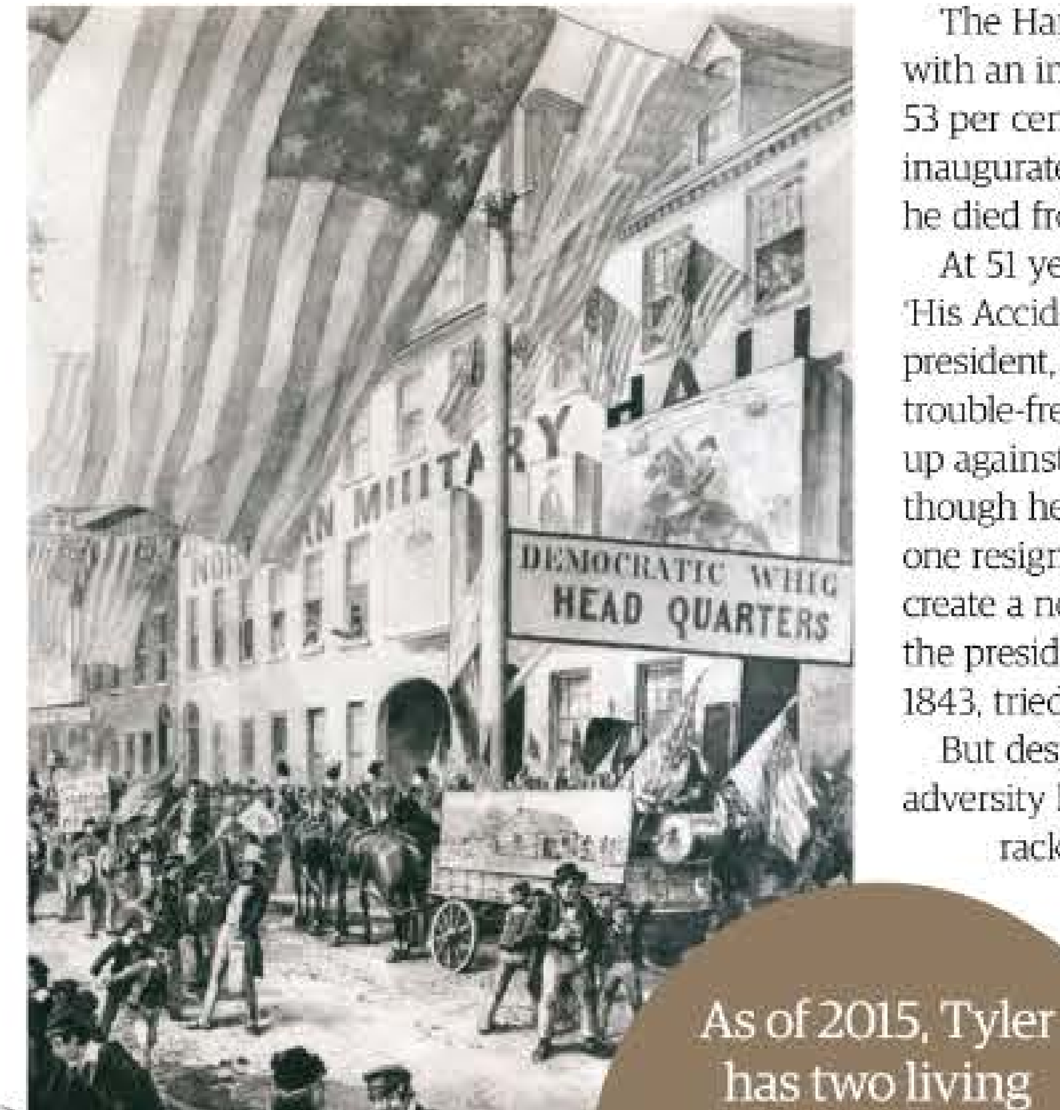
## Dubbed 'His Accidency' by opponents, John Tyler was a president without a party, but still achieved several significant political feats

John Tyler's presidency was something of an accident. Taken in by the Whig party in a bid to capture the southern vote, he only assumed office after the death of President William Henry Harrison, who passed away from pneumonia after just a month in the White House. The 10th president was therefore never meant to have an entry in the history books, but he made an indelible mark nonetheless.

Born into a prominent family in Charles City County, Virginia, Tyler grew up with eight siblings, all receiving the best education money could buy. He studied law, was admitted to the bar in 1809 and when his father became governor of Virginia, used his father's contacts to gain a position in the Virginia House of Delegates aged just 21.

His political career saw him serve in the Virginia legislature from 1811 to 1816 and the US House of Representatives from 1817 to 1821. He was elected to Congress as a Democratic-Republican and never wavered from his conviction that the Constitution must be strictly construed: he favoured states' rights and opposed policies granting additional powers to federal government. The politics of the popular Andrew Jackson represented everything Tyler hated, and when Jackson's government tried to restrict slavery in the new states west of Missouri Tyler saw it as such an abuse of federal power that he resigned in disgust.

After undertaking extensive political work in his home state, where he became revered as a champion of the south, Tyler returned to




© Alamy

Washington in 1827, reluctantly supporting Jackson's re-election in 1832. But it wasn't long before he became frustrated, and twice he brazenly condemned the president – on the Senate floor – for what he considered to be an abuse of power. He soon left again, this time bandying with Henry Clay and Daniel Webster in their newly formed opposition Whig Party.

The failure of the next president, Martin Van Buren, to clean up Jackson's economic mess gave the Whigs the opportunity for power come the 1840 election. Their presidential candidate William Henry Harrison was portrayed as a humble, salt-of-the-earth frontiersman (despite the fact that he, like many of the Whigs, was highly educated and it was in fact Van Buren who came from humble roots), while John Tyler was put up for vice-presidency, hoping to garner support from southern states. As Harrison had fought at the Battle of Tippecanoe, the party used the slogan 'Tippecanoe and Tyler too', implying flag-waving nationalism with a hint of southern sectionalism.

As of 2015, Tyler has two living grandsons, making him the earliest former president with living grandchildren

The Harrison-Tyler ticket won the White House with an impressive vote of 234-60 and around 53 per cent of the popular vote. Harrison was inaugurated on March 4 1841. Just one month later, he died from pneumonia.

At 51 years old, John Tyler, henceforth dubbed 'His Accidency', was younger than any previous president, and his single term in office was far from trouble-free. In his new role, he soon found himself up against the Whigs' legislative agenda, and even though he kept Harrison's cabinet in place, all but one resigned after Tyler vetoed ills designed to create a new national bank. To make matters worse, the president was disavowed by the Whigs, who in 1843, tried but failed to impeach him.

But despite his unlikely position – and the adversity he faced when he got there – Tyler racked up an impressive list of achievements during his time as president. In 1841 he signed the Preemption Act, which catalysed western settlement by allowing citizens to stake a claim on public land and buy it from the government. Then in 1842 he ended the long-running Seminole War in Florida and settled ongoing disputes between the US and Britain over Canadian border issues – two factors that had dogged Martin Van Buren's time in office. In 1844 Tyler oversaw the signing of the Treaty of Wanghia, which gave America access to Asian ports, thus broadening its import and export markets, and in 1845 he signed a bill annexing Texas. On his final full day as president, Tyler signed a bill making Florida the 27th state.

Despite his considerable contribution to the United States' burgeoning growth and prosperity, Tyler's eventual death in 1862 was not publicly acknowledged by the US government. With the nation on the brink of civil war, he chaired a peace conference in Washington, DC in an attempt to preserve the Union, but once war broke out Tyler voted in favour of Virginia seceding from the United States. He was considered a traitor to the Union upon his death, which also served to signal the last gasp of old Virginian aristocracy in the White House.

## A leader without followers

Despite Tyler's apparent 'luck' in landing the presidency, he was none too humble upon his succession. After being reminded of Harrison's practice of making policy by majority vote, he told his Cabinet: "I beg your pardon, gentlemen; I am very glad to have in my Cabinet such able statesmen as you have proved yourselves to be. And I shall be pleased to avail myself of your counsel. But I can never consent to being dictated to as to what I shall or shall not do. I, as president, shall be responsible for my administration. I hope to have your hearty co-operation in carrying out its measures. So long as you see fit to do this, I shall be glad to have you with me. When you think otherwise, your resignations will be accepted." All but one of the members resigned.





An etching of John Tyler during his time as president, circa 1841

## Life in the time of John Tyler

### Florida becomes a state

Florida became the 27th state of the US, officiated by John Tyler on his final full day as president. At the time almost half of the state's population were enslaved African Americans working on large cotton and sugar plantations.

### Inventions abound

The US saw a large number of pivotal inventions during this period, including Morse Code, the electric doorbell, the combine harvester, the lock-stitch sewing machine and the circuit breaker.

### Cherokee displacement

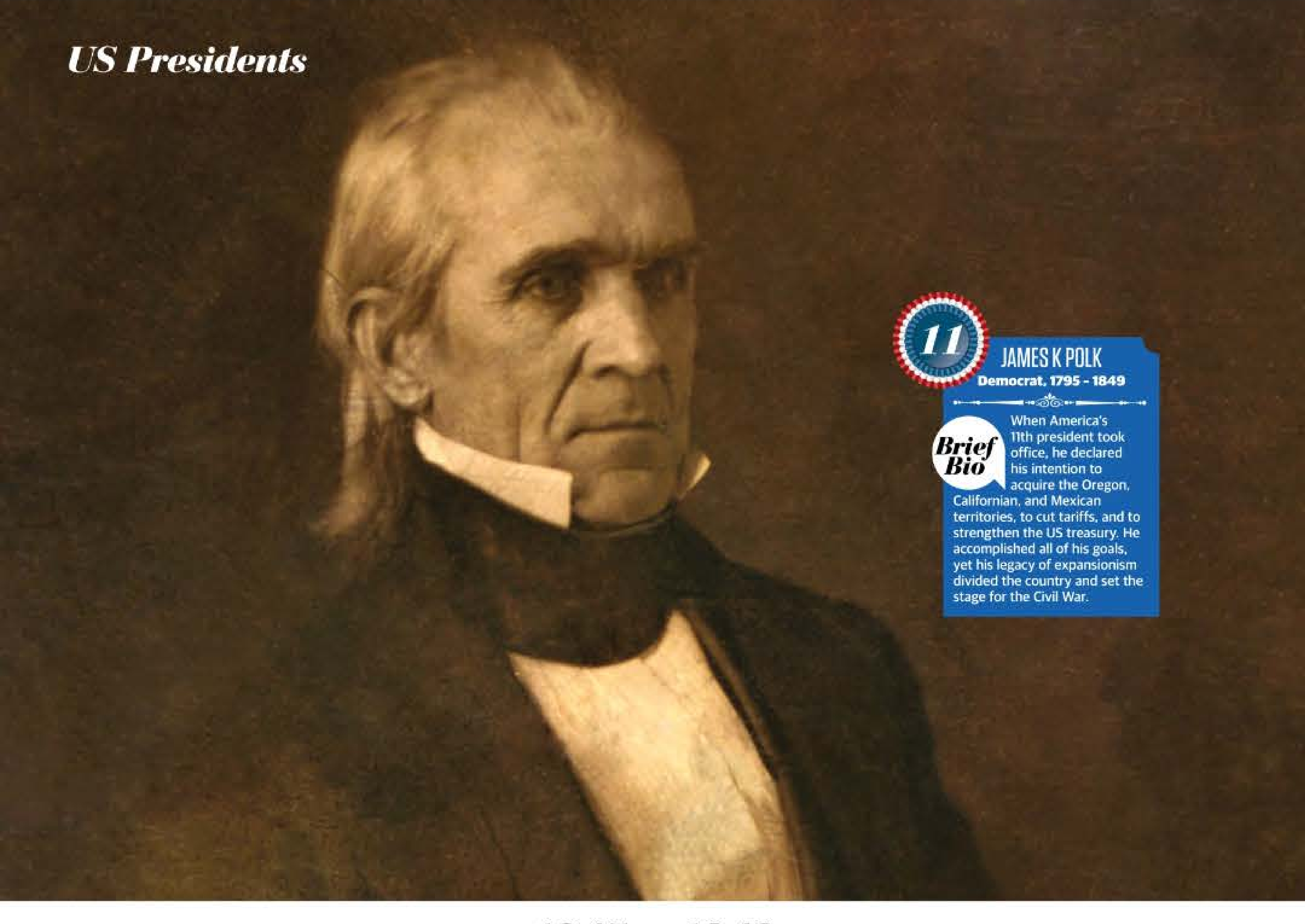
In 1838, the forced removal of the Cherokee Nation from the southeastern United States along the Trail of Tears resulted in more than 4,000 Native American deaths.

### Civil war in Rhode Island

The Dorr Rebellion, 1841-1842, was a failed attempt to enforce broader democracy in the US state of Rhode Island, where a small rural elite were in charge of government. The rebellion's leader Tomas Dorr was later found guilty of treason against the state and sentenced to hard labour and solitary confinement for life.

### Mexican-American War

From spring 1846 to autumn 1847, a war raged between the United States and Mexico. Initiated by the US disputing where the border of newly-annexed Texas fell, the battle resulted in Mexico's defeat and the loss of approximately half its national territory in the north. Thousands of lives were lost.




## 1845 – 1849

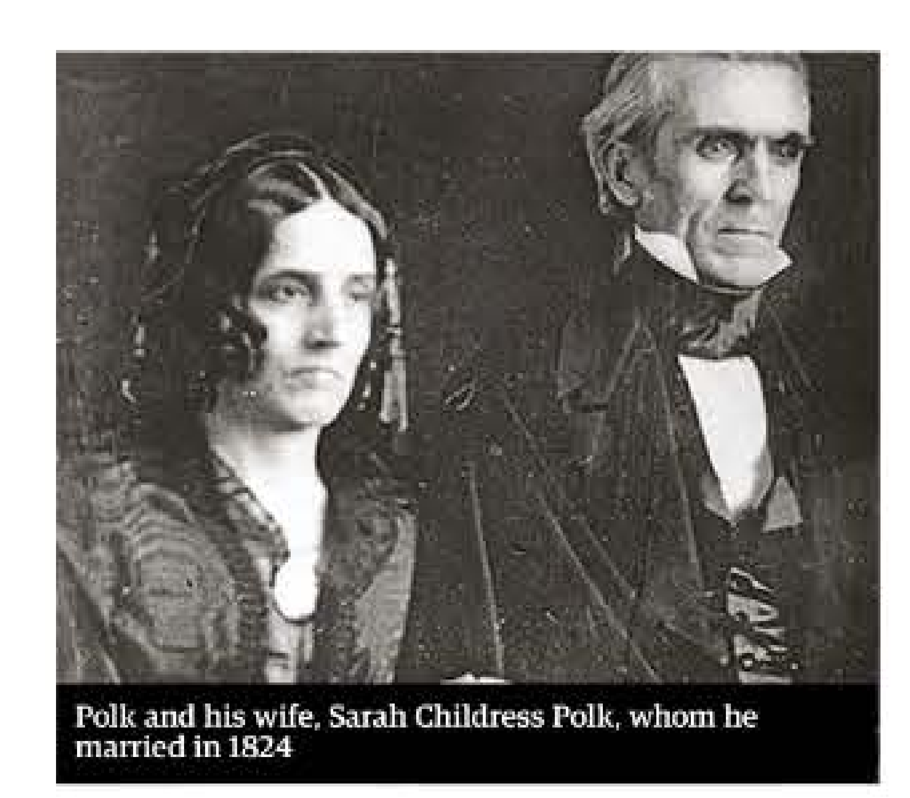
# James K Polk

During his short time in office, James Polk oversaw the greatest territorial expansion in US history, stretching the nation's lands from coast to coast

James Knox Polk was born in a log cabin in North Carolina, the first of ten children. His early professional years were spent as a trial attorney, and he would later recruit colleagues from his legal career in his political life. He notably elevated his friend Gideon Pillow to brigadier general during the Mexican-American War, who proved an infamously inept commander.

Polk was elected to the House of Representatives at the young age of 29. During his time in Congress, he gained notoriety for a speech in which he suggested that the president be elected directly by popular vote. As speaker of the House, he was frequently insulted by political opponents, but notably he never took part in a duel, as was expected in that era. His nomination for the presidency was a shock - he had lost a race for the governor of Tennessee nine months earlier. When the frontrunners announced their opposition to annexing Texas, the pro-annexation Polk swept into the lead. In 1845, he was elected president on a platform of radical westward expansion, which would later be dubbed Manifest Destiny.

James Polk was not averse to conflict, so when the issue of the Oregon territory arose, pitting the young American nation against the United Kingdom, he threatened war. The large and mostly unpopulated tract of land had been jointly governed by the US and the UK for 30 years when Polk entered office. A democratic Congress clamoured for the entire northwest of the American continent (stretching up to Alaska), but Polk was willing to settle, and he agreed to divide the territory along the 49th parallel. The immense tract of land encompassed



Polk and his wife, Sarah Childress Polk, whom he married in 1824

modern-day Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and parts of Montana and Wyoming.

Not satisfied with this expansion, Polk presided over the last chapter in the annexation of Texas. The large territory was governed by four separate entities between 1820 and 1845. First belonging to the Spanish Empire for 300 years, later part of Mexico, Texas rebelled in 1836, as the settlers declared themselves part of an independent republic. In the 1840s, faced with debts and military harassment from Mexico, Texas sought to join the United States. The proposition bitterly divided Congress, as the northern Whig party feared the effects of admitting a large slave-owning state into the Union. The question of Texas loomed large over the presidential election of 1844. Polk ran on a platform of admitting both Texas and the disputed Oregon territory into the Union, thereby placating the northern Whigs (who were happy to accept the non-slave-owning Oregon territory). Polk won a narrow victory – but he nevertheless interpreted his win as a mandate to pursue an expansionist policy of Manifest Destiny. Under his guidance, Texas was quickly accepted into the Union as a slave state, deepening the rift between the north and the south, and angering Mexico, which believed it to be their sovereign territory.

Polk was a radical expansionist, believing in the divine duty of Americans to expand further westward. Envisioning future lucrative maritime trade with the Far East, he set out to buy California and New Mexico. When Mexico rejected the American overtures, Polk was outraged, and he decided to seek an excuse for war. He sent a force of 4,000 troops to march to the Rio Grande, an area that was still disputed between the two nations. When Mexican troops fired on the American soldiers, whom they believed to be an invading force, Polk appeared before Congress and proclaimed that Mexicans had "shed American blood on American soil."

He had his war. Mexico was politically divided and unprepared for the conflict. The first US war fought on foreign soil saw American troops occupy large swathes of territory, establish a maritime blockade, and march towards Mexico City, facing minimal resistance. In 1848, Mexico formed a government capable of negotiating, and agreed to the Treaty of Guadelupe Hidalgo. The agreement ceded a gigantic region of the west coast to the US, including all of present-day California, Nevada, Utah, and most of New Mexico in exchange for a nominal payment. Mexico may have been more averse to signing the treaty had they known that significant caches of gold had been discovered in California just days earlier. The acquisition reignited the long-running vicious debate over slavery in new states, which would rumble on until the Civil War 15 years later.

James Polk is considered one of the most effective presidents in the pre-Civil War era, having expanded executive powers, especially with regard to leading the military and negotiating treaties. He set ambitious goals and achieved them all. He was ardent in his desire to expand the American state westward, even at the cost of conflicts entered into under false pretences. And the question of whether slavery would be allowed in the new territories redoubled the existential debate in an already fragmented political environment. Polk, a southern slave owner, had no qualms about admitting Texas as a slave state into the Union.

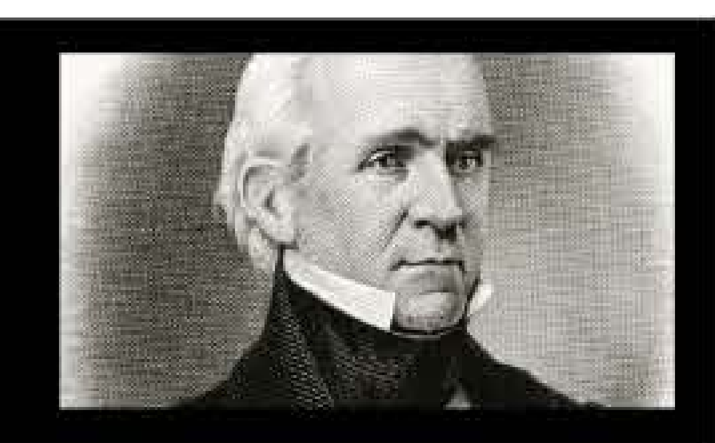
> Polk's first case as a lawyer saw him defend his father from a charge of public fighting

James Polk was not known for his lively personal life or charisma, and he banned music, dancing, and gambling from the White House during his term. He was infamously sober, with one contemporary remarking that Polk "was the victim of the use of water as a beverage."

Towards the end of his term, the stress of the job weighed on Polk heavily, and he contracted cholera on a farewell tour. His untimely death, very soon after leaving the presidency, led historians to suggest that he was the only President to have died of overwork. He holds the record for the shortest retirement of any President – just 103 days.

## The Mexican-American War

The defining moment of Polk's presidency was an invasion of Mexico which secured the entirety of the American southwest and established the modern-day border with Mexico at the Rio Grande. Polk won a resounding military victory and ignored American calls to annex of Mexico, instead striking a deal to force a purchase of over half of Mexico's territory for a nominal sum.



GPA Healy's portrait of Polk was painted circa 1858, almost a decade after the former president's death

## Life in the time of James K Polk

### Manifest Destiny reigns

The doctrine that Americans had a divine right to colonise the entire continent dominated politics, and the little-known Polk successfully rode that platform to the presidency. He would expand American territory by one third in his single term.

### Famine and immigration

The Irish potato famine began in 1845, causing millions of Irish immigrants to begin their pilgrimage to the US. Nativist sentiment was high at the time and the immigrants suffered from discrimination for decades.

### Inching towards civil war

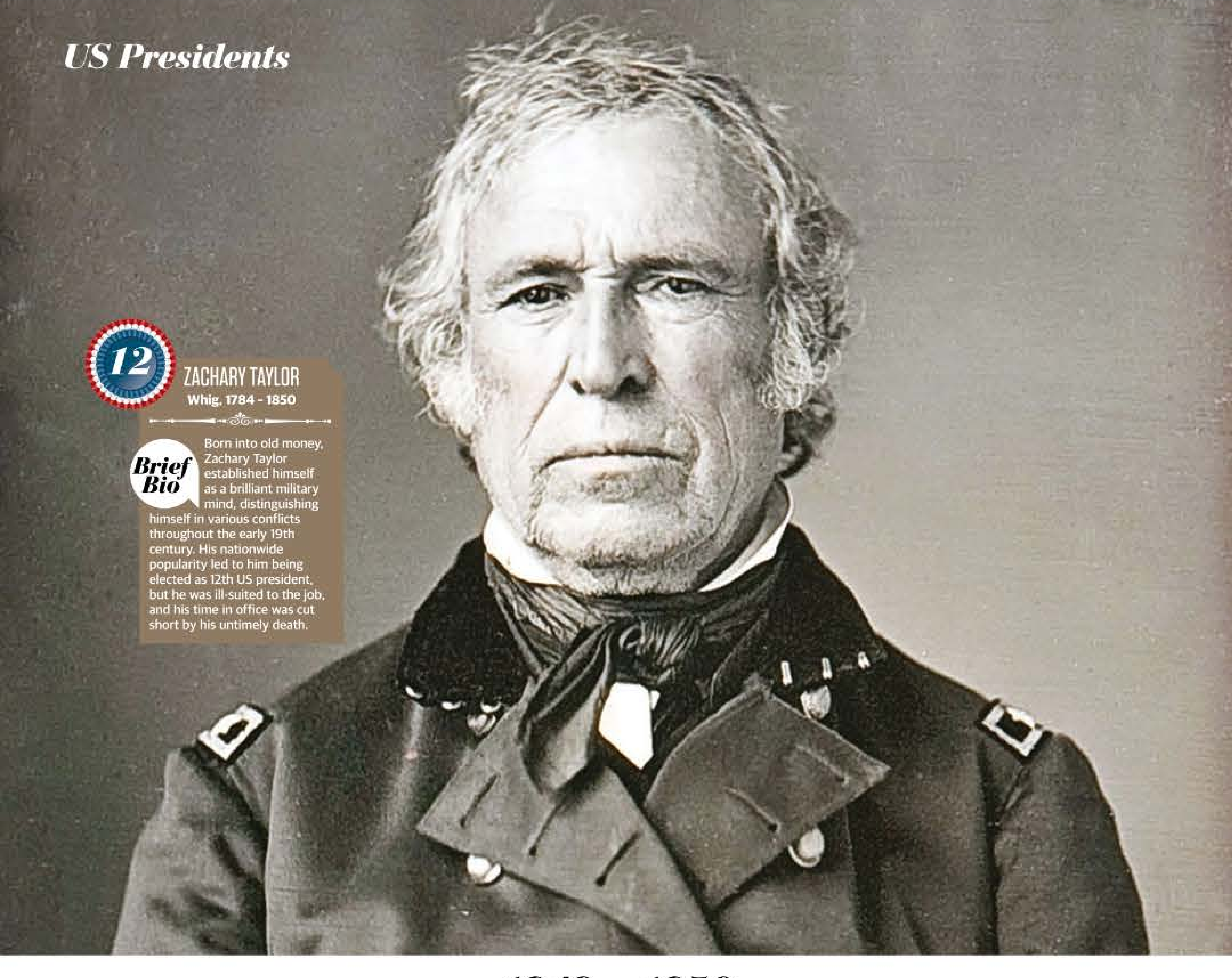
The Fugitive Slave Law is passed as part of the compromise governing the status of slaves in newly acquired territories, allowing southern states to pursue escaped slaves in the north. This would galvanise the north against slavery and deepen the rift which would lead the country down a path to civil war.

### Social movements abound

The mid 1800s saw the rise of advocacy groups devoted to women's suffrage and the abolition of slavery. The emergent Temperance movement would eventually lobby successfully for Prohibition.

### A shift to Jacksonian democracy

Andrew Jackson and his acolytes promoted universal suffrage for all white males in the first half of the 19th century. Requirements that voters be taxpayers or property owners were dropped by 1850.



12

ZACHARY TAYLOR

Whig, 1784 - 1850

**Brief Bio**

Born into old money, Zachary Taylor established himself as a brilliant military mind, distinguishing himself in various conflicts throughout the early 19th century. His nationwide popularity led to him being elected as 12th US president, but he was ill-suited to the job, and his time in office was cut short by his untimely death.

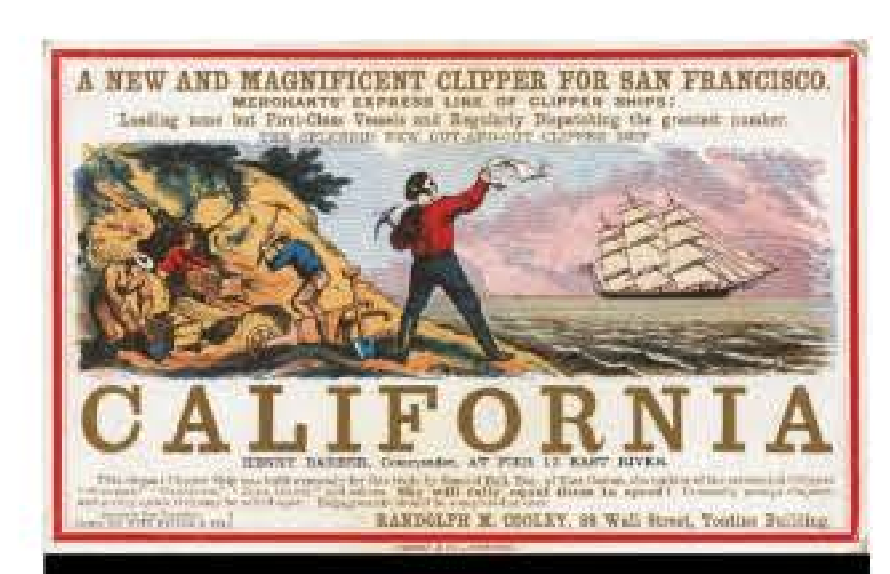
*1849 – 1850*

# Zachary Taylor

## Taylor impressed in the military, but when it came to the White House he was out of his depth

As a military man, Zachary Taylor was an inspirational leader. But as a president he was far from that. To be fair, he never sought the presidency; other parties came to him, requesting he be their candidate, and for good reason. After his involvement in the Mexican-American War, he became a war hero and a celebrity of sorts across the United States. However, he had no political background, and few political beliefs. Upon his appointment as president he had never registered to vote, amazingly not even for himself. His lack of knowledge and experience in the field showed throughout his presidency.

Taylor was born on 24 November 1784, on a plantation in Orange County, Virginia. His family were prominent planters of English ancestry. They were also well-known slave holders, a fact that would later help him both gain supporters and lose them. Later on in Taylor's childhood, his family upped sticks and migrated to Louisville, Kentucky. The family was relatively wealthy; they owned 10,000 acres of land throughout the state, and kept




### The California Gold Rush

Just over a year before Taylor's presidency, a discovery on the opposite side of the country sparked one of the most significant events in the history of the United States. Gold nuggets were found in California's Sacramento Valley, and as news spread thousands of potential gold miners flocked in from all over the country, wanting to get in on the action. The sudden Gold Rush did wonders for California. The population increased tenfold and, by 1852, a total of $2 billion worth of precious metals had been extracted from the area. Fast success from the state became known as the 'California Dream'.

26 slaves in order to cultivate the most developed areas. Due to the fact that they lived out in the middle of nowhere, Taylor's formal education was pretty sporadic.

On 3 May, 1808, when Taylor was 23, he joined the US Army and received a commission as a first lieutenant of the Seventh Infantry Regiment, an event that would shape the rest of his adult life. He worked his way up the ranks until he was promoted to captain in 1810. In his downtime, he followed in his father's footsteps and became a slave-holder with his own plantation in Louisville, which he bought for $95,000. He continued buying plantations and slaves until he had 200 men working for him. In 1811, he was called back into service and sent to the Indiana Territory, where he assumed control of Fort Knox and managed to restore order to the garrison. He was applauded by his superiors, and a long and successful military career followed, leading armies in the War of 1812, the Black Hawk War in 1828 and the Second Seminole War in 1837. Then in 1846, Taylor commanded American forces in the Mexican-American War. His victories, especially those where his troops were greatly outnumbered, were the talk of the land and he was branded a war hero.

Taylor finally found himself dabbling in politics in 1846 when the members of the Whig Party wanted him to stand as a candidate in the presidential election. Before this point, Taylor had not made his political beliefs public (if he had any at all), but he soon realised that he identified with the party's governing policies, which were as follows: the president should not be able to veto a law, unless that law was against the Constitution; that the office should not interfere with Congress; and that the power of collective decision-making, as well as the Cabinet, should be strong. At first, Taylor insisted he had no interest in campaigning for president, but the Whig Party eventually wore him down.

As a candidate, he had a lot of desirable qualities. The fact that he was a war hero was attractive to voters from the north, and his background in slave-holding meant he appealed to many from the south. In 1848, Taylor ran for president with prominent New York Whig Millard Fillmore, who was chosen in an attempt to repair relations with northern Whigs who were furious that the party's candidate was a slave-owning southerner. The reconciliation must have worked, as the pair were voted into office, and Taylor became the 12th President of the United States.

During his military years, Taylor's nickname was Old Rough and Ready, which was attributed to both his enduring fighting spirit and his general slovenly appearance. But the astounding leadership skills he displayed to his troops were almost nonexistent in his short time as president. While he was in office, slavery was a topic hot on most Americans' minds, and Taylor's slave-holding background did little to help him. However, while he didn't work towards making slavery illegal, he was opposed to the creation of new slaves.

> Taylor is the third shortest-serving US President, beaten only by James A Garfield and William Henry Harrison

On Independence Day, 1850, Taylor attended a joyous and elaborate ceremony marking the erection of the Washington Monument. It was of course the middle of summer and scorching hot. To cool down, he enjoyed a bowl of cherries and a pitcher of cold milk. Within hours of finishing the snack, he started to experience severe stomach pains. Five days later, he was dead.

For many years, the cause of Taylor's death remained unknown. Some believed that he'd suffered from gastroenteritis, aggravated by Washington's open sewers. But others wondered if his demise had come as a result of his opposition of new slave land, and the deadly enemies that had made him. Theories of a possible assassination were concocted and spread, leading many to believe that the cherries and milk he had enjoyed that 4 July had been laced with arsenic. The mystery remained unsolved for 141 years. Eventually, determined to uncover the truth, a historian managed to convince Taylor's descendants to allow his body to be exhumed. Upon examination, there was no evidence of foul play. It wasn't poison that had killed him, as many suspected, but cholera: a disappointing end to the mysterious demise of a disappointing president.


Taylor rose to the rank of major general before he was elected to serve as president

## Life in the time of Zachary Taylor

### In Washington we trust

The United States of America got its first ever president in the form of Founding Father George Washington. He was sworn in to presidency on the balcony of New York's Federal Hall on 30 April 1789 before entering the Senate chamber to deliver his legendary inaugural address.

### Vive la France

While the United States were welcoming their first Founding Fathers, the people of France were rising up against their oppressors with the start of the French Revolution. It started with the storming of the Bastille on 14 July 1789, an event that was witnessed by American ambassador Thomas Jefferson.

### My, my, at Waterloo

On Sunday, 18 June 1815, the Battle of Waterloo was fought in Belgium, and Napoleon and the French army were finally defeated by two of the armies of the Seventh Coalition under the command of the Duke of Wellington and Gebhard Leberecht von Blücher.

### Slaves no more

While Taylor kept slaves on his plantations in Kentucky, slavery was being made illegal once and for all in New York. In 1703, more than 42 percent of New York households held slaves. Over a century later in 1827, the last of the city's slaves were finally freed.

### By the telegram

On 24 May 1844, inventor Samuel FB Morse made history when he sent the first ever telegram. The message in question was sent over an experimental line from Washington, DC to Baltimore, and read, "What hath God wrought?" Telegrams soon became a popular method of communication, used in countries around the world.



As a member of the Whig Party, Millard Fillmore was the last US president not to be associated with either the Democratic or Republican parties

13

MILLARD FILLMORE
**Whig, 1800 - 1887**

*Brief Bio*

The last of the Whigs, Millard Fillmore rose from a poverty-stricken upbringing to become the 13th president of the United States. Rising tensions between northern and southern states marred his time in office however, and his presidency is generally viewed unfavourably by modern scholars.

*1850 – 1853*

# Millard Fillmore

## From rags to riches, Fillmore showed how hard work and perseverance could make the American dream come true

Despite the PR spiel of many early US presidents, Millard Fillmore was one of very few to have been born in a log cabin, in New York's Finger Lakes region. The second of nine children and the eldest son, Fillmore grew up in extreme poverty, enduring all the hardships afforded by life on the frontier.

After two years of brutal apprenticeship to a cloth maker - taken to help keep the family solvent - Fillmore moved to New Hope, New York aged 17. Obsessed with throwing off the shackles of his former poverty, he threw himself into self-taught education, stealing books to enrich his studies.

His hard work paid off, and in 1823 he was admitted to the New York bar, beginning his political career with the Anti-Masonic Party as a young lawyer. With democratic libertarian principles, Fillmore was soon elected to the state assembly, and became a close ally of powerful New York political boss Thurlow Weed, who supported his run for the House of Representatives in 1831.

He served four terms in Congress, but decided not to run for re-election after 1843. Weed encouraged him to run for governor of New York, and although he was unsuccessful Fillmore continued to strengthen his position in New York,, helping to establish the University at Buffalo and serving as its first chancellor. In 1847 he was elected to the prestigious position of New York comptroller (chief financial officer), overseeing and revising the city's banking system.

In 1848, the Whig Party groomed Fillmore as its next vice presidential candidate. They hoped, during a period fraught with tension over slavery




issues, that Fillmore's northern pro-business stance would act as the yin to presidential candidate's Zachary Taylor's southern yang: the party needed widespread appeal.

A hard-fought election ensued, and while the pair - who didn't even meet until after the election - were ultimately successful, they could not have been more different in personal politics. Aggrieved with Fillmore's abolitionist sympathies, Taylor pushed him into the Senate, denying him any real political influence. However, the Senate was beginning to debate several bills addressing slavery, and it would be through these Fillmore that would leave his mark.

When President Taylor took ill suddenly and died on July 9 1850, Fillmore was left to assume the role of the United States' 13th president. It was a difficult transition as Taylor's cabinet resigned, and Fillmore appointed Daniel Webster as his secretary of state, clearly positioning himself with moderate Whigs who supported legislation designed to quell tensions between slave and free states.

The Compromise of 1850 would define Fillmore's presidency. The legislation comprised a package of five separate bills: admitting California to the union as a free state, settling the Texas boundary with compensation, granting New Mexico territorial status, abolishing the slave trade in Washington, DC and putting federal officers at the disposal of slave owners seeking runaway slaves.

Fillmore was opposed to slavery personally, but, confronted with vociferously opposing factions, he all-but ignored the issue in states where slavery already existed, thinking it better to preserve the union than invite further conflict. This coupled with his consistent authorisation of federal force to return fugitive slaves only infuriated northern abolitionists - including those in his own party. As such, the compromise is generally remembered for prolonging sectional clashes rather than effectively addressing any deeply rooted problems.

Fillmore upset southerners by refusing to back an invasion of Cuba, which would have expanded slavery into the Caribbean. Having disgruntled previous supporters in both the north and south, he was overlooked in 1852 for re-nomination by the Whig Party. It was a blow at the time but the party broke down when it became clear the compromise was merely temporary. Tired of the conflict, Fillmore refused to join the Republican Party, and instead turned his attention to the short-lived Know-Nothing Party, where he accepted presidential nomination. After finishing third behind Democrat James Buchanan and Republican John C Fremont, Fillmore retired from politics and died in 1874 after suffering a stroke.

Largely remembered for his failure to adequately address sectional conflict, Fillmore nonetheless played an important role in expanding the United States' economy. He opened trade with Japan, restored diplomatic relations with Mexico and backed a transcontinental railroad. He also worked tirelessly to keep the Hawaiian Islands out of European hands. Alas, these efforts are often overshadowed by his ambivalent stance towards more pressing issues, which ultimately cost him his career.

> Fillmore fell in love with his teacher, Abigail Powers, when he was 19, but refused to marry her until he had properly established himself as a lawyer

## The Compromise and Civil War

While some would argue that the Compromise only made pre-existing sectional divisions more obvious and failed to address the root of the issue, many historians agree that the legislation played a major role in postponing the American Civil War for a decade.

However, the delay in hostilities meant the free economy of the northern states had more time to industrialise, and by 1860 had added miles of railroad, steel production and factories, not to mention grow its population. The southern states, dependent on slave labour and crop production, lacked the ability to industrialise as well. Come the outbreak of war, the north was considerably better able to supply, equip and man its armed forces.




The Great Famine in Ireland drove hundreds of thousands of Irish immigrants to seek a new life in the United States

# Life in the time of Millard Fillmore

### Women's lib

Amelia Bloomer (creator of the bloomer undergarments) became famous for her women's rights newspaper *The Lily*, and the first ever national women's right convention took place in Worcester, Massachusetts in October 1850. Despite vocal naysayers, delegates from 11 states attended.

### The creation of a snack legend

Fed up with a customer who kept complaining that his fried potatoes were too thick and soggy, New York chef George Crum decided to slice the potatoes so thinly they couldn't be eaten with a fork. The customer was ecstatic about the new chips - today called crisps - which came to be known as 'Saratoga chips'.

### Irish immigration

The potato famine took hold of Ireland in 1845, initiating mass immigration to the US. Records show that in 1850 a record 369,980 people made the then-perilous journey across the Atlantic. Irish women accounted for 70 to 80 per cent of American domestic servants.

### Mental illness becomes commercialised

So-called 'lunatic asylums' were popular throughout the United States during the 1850s, intended originally for stressed-out city dwellers in search of relaxation. But jaunts to such establishments were very costly, and asylums soon began opening their doors to more seriously troubled individuals at the request of officials.

### Interior design

Style in 1850s the US was very much dominated by European trends. Having not yet established 'American style', consumers wanted French clothing and English furniture in Victorian fashions. Well-made, quality English furniture was highly sought-after and expensive.



14

**FRANKLIN PIERCE**

**Democrat, 1804 - 1869**

**Brief Bio**

Though he came from a proud military family and distinguished himself as an outstanding lawyer, Franklin Pierce's time in the White House was dogged by poor decision-making, increasing tensions over the issue of slavery, and persistent doubts over his suitability for the office.

During the 1852 election Pierce was disparagingly called the 'hero of many a hard-fought bottle' by his Whig opponents

*1853 – 1857*

# Franklin Pierce

## An amiable, pliable nonentity who became president by accidents of circumstance, Pierce left the country lurching towards civil war

At 12 years old, a homesick Franklin Pierce walked from school to his home in Hillsborough, New Hampshire. Upon his return, his father Benjamin, a county sheriff who had served in the Revolutionary War, fed him then drove him back to school until, when a thunderstorm broke, he ordered Franklin out of the carriage to walk the rest of the way. It was "the turning point in my life", Pierce later noted, going from a misbehaving pupil to one who worked to improve his grades.

During childhood, his family entertained war veterans, which may have inspired him to establish a militia company that performed a drill on the campus of his college in Brunswick, Maine, calling a strike when the college president told them to stop. During and after his graduation year he taught, but his father envisaged a career in law, so Pierce read law in Massachusetts and New Hampshire, then started a law practice back in his hometown of Hillsborough. Bright and with an amiable presence and a deep voice, he gained fame as an attorney, and it was natural that he followed his father into public service. He did so 1828 when, just as his father was voted out of office, he was elected as Hillsborough town moderator, and to the New Hampshire Legislature the following year. At just 27, and on a platform opposing 'unconstitutional' banking expansion and protection for the state militia, he was the youngest speaker of the House in the state's history by 1831.

Pierce's career and his personal life ran in happy parallel, for as well as becoming a Democratic congressional representative for New Hampshire

in the winter of 1832, he became engaged to Jane Appleton, a minister's daughter. On 9 November 1834 they were married. "I have been leading a very agreeable life" wrote Pierce of Washington life, alluding to the start of a dark dance with alcohol. Just over a year later, their first child, Franklin, lived only three days. Already a frail and shy person, Jane's loathing for the Washington political scene only amplified her melancholic predisposition. After having served five terms, they returned to New Hampshire in 1838, but tragically their second son died from typhus two years later. A third son, Benjamin - upon whom Jane doted after his birth in 1841 - gave her a reason to stay robust.

After a loss of face in the Mexican-American War, Pierce returned to practising law, doing so superbly. Pledging to never again leave his family, he was unwilling to seek office again, yet knew that his position as de facto leader of the New Hampshire Democratic Party would be threatened if he did not. Having allowed friends to campaign for him as the party's presidential nominee, he was aghast at winning. In the presidential election of 1852, despite the division of his party over the question of slavery, and being labelled a cowardly alcoholic by his former commander, the Whig candidate Winifred Scott, Pierce won by a landslide. Of the then-youngest elected president (at only 48), The New York Tribune said, "We have fallen on great times for little men."

Wanting a more efficient and accountable government, President Pierce implemented civil service examinations, and made the Interior Department and Treasury more systematised and averse to fraud and corruption. By nominating cabinet members from all his party's factions he tried to rectify divisions over the slavery issue that were undermining the Democrats. Slavery was banned or regulated in western territories under the Missouri Compromise of 1820. But since more settlers wanted slavery, the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 nullified this agreement by permitting these newly created territories to decide whether to allow slavery. In the Senate and the country the act was rancorously fought between third-party 'Freesoilers', abolitionist 'Jayhawkers', and pro-slavery supporters. Pierce found the act unappealing and not his responsibility, but in seeing it as a problem of being conciliatory to the southern slave states, he was eventually manipulated into supporting it. As anti-slavery and pro-slavery settlers established their own legislatures in Kansas, violence broke. Recognising the pro-slavery government at Lecompton, Pierce ordered the anti-slavery government at Topeka to disband and sent troops to maintain order. The consequence of the president's miscalculation over the biggest domestic issue he faced alienated him, and was a big stride towards civil war.

In overseas matters, Pierce was an expansionist whose small successes were undercut by naive decisions. He alienated the British by expelling their ambassador over American enlistments in the United Kingdom's war against Russia. In Nicaragua, an ad hoc regime set up by the military 'filibusterer' William Walker was recognised by Pierce, until the transport tycoon Cornelius Vanderbilt persuaded him to send Navy forces to make Walker surrender. Worse still was the Ostend Manifesto, a justification of the forceful seizure of Cuba from Spain if they refused to sell the island to the United States, a situation of benefit to southern slave-traders and owners. Its serving as a rallying cry for abolitionists was disastrous for Pierce's administration which sympathised with the southern cause, and weakened his Democrat Party, which, between that and the Kansas farrago, lost almost every state outside the South at the midterm congressional elections of 1854-1855. At next year's Democratic national convention James Buchanan was chosen as the presidential nominee instead of President Pierce, a unique humiliation. Shortly before Pierce left office, his secretary BB French remarked, "Whoever may be elected, we cannot get a poorer cuss than now disgraces the presidential chair!" Pierce subsequently returned to New Hampshire to speculate in property.

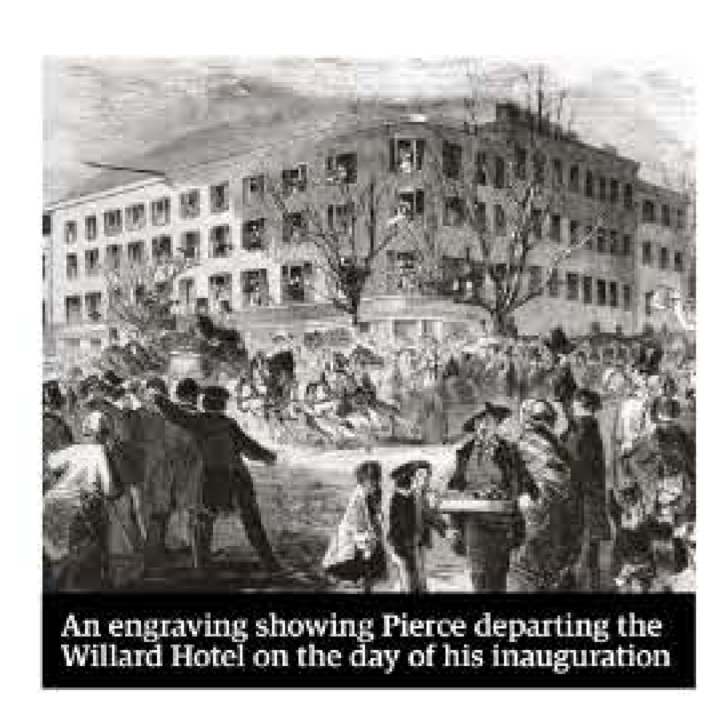
While travelling in Europe, he kept his hand in politics, further eroding his reputation by revealing his support of southern secessionist states. Despite denouncing alcohol a decade earlier as "a body-destroying, heartbreaking habit", he succumbed to it, writing "After the White House what is there to do but drink?".

Much like his time in office, Pierce's personal life had been riddled with trauma. He entered into presidency in mourning, after the tragic death of his last-remaining son, which arguably tainted the future outcome of his presidency.

## Uncle Tom's Cabin

In the year Franklin Pierce became president, Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was published. It was mainly inspired by the life of Josiah Henson, who escaped slavery in 1830 and founded a settlement and school for other fugitive slaves in Canada before publishing his autobiography in 1849. In Stowe's novel, Tom's story of escape and recapture is strongly infused with Christianity and abolitionist sentiments. The book's great impact on abolitionism is encapsulated by Abraham Lincoln's (apocryphal) remark upon meeting Stowe: "So this is the little lady who started this great war." It became the United States' second bestselling book after the Bible.





An engraving showing Pierce departing the Willard Hotel on the day of his inauguration

# Life in the time of Franklin Pierce

### Friends at Bowdoin

From Bowdoin College, Pierce became lifelong friends with the writer Nathaniel Hawthorne, who wrote many allegories including *The House of Seven Gables* and *The Scarlet Letter*, and whose death Pierce was present at. Also at that time he befriended the poet and educator Henry Longfellow.

### A cowardly commander?

Hoping to emulate his father, Pierce's command of a brigade in the Mexican-American War faltered when his horse was shot out from underneath him, giving him a knee injury, and the reputation of a coward for looking like he had fainted. While still wounded he attempted to fight, yet hated war "in all its aspects."

### Barnburners and Hunkers

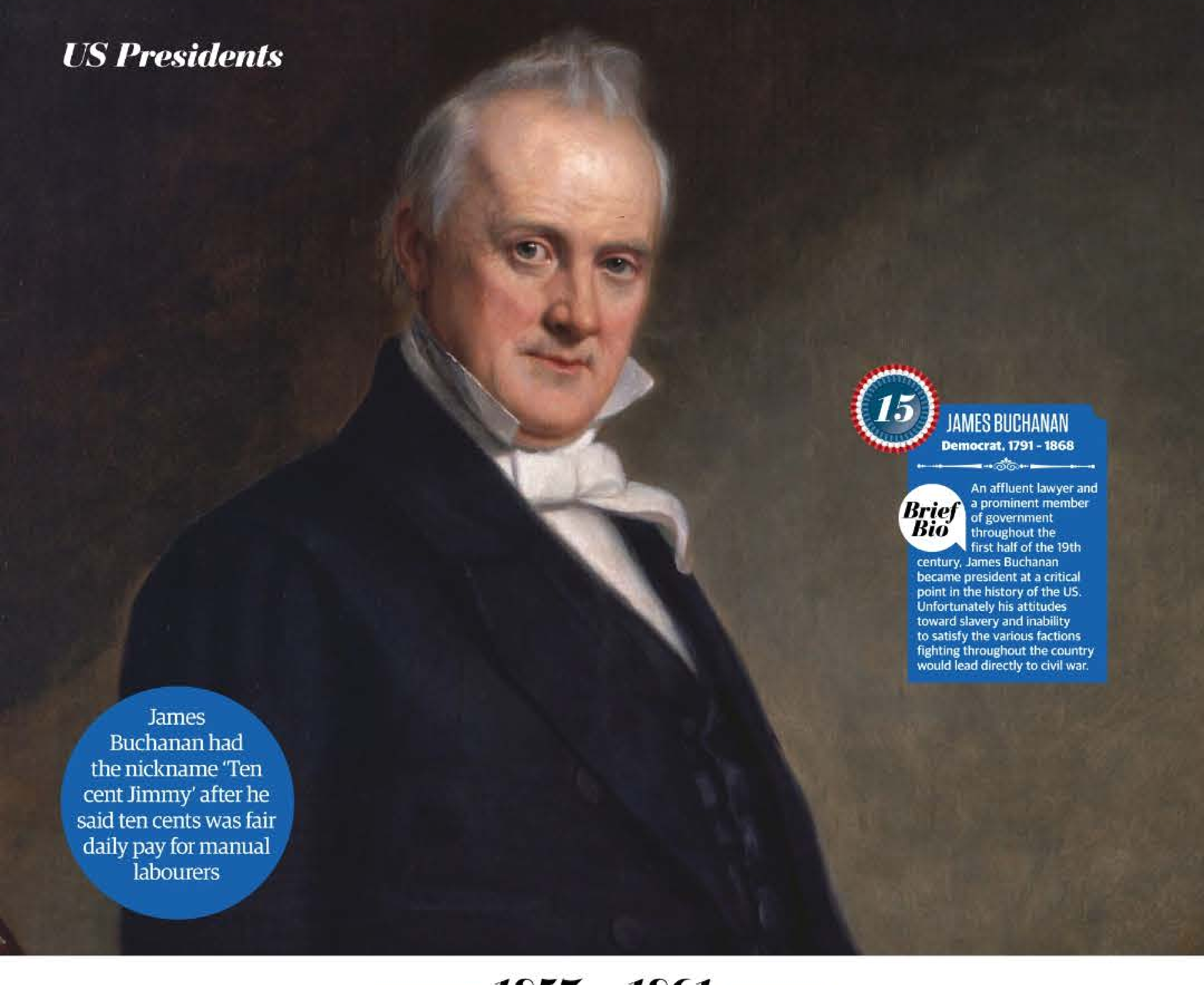
The two opposing factions of the New York state Democratic party in the 1840s were the radical, anti-slavery 'Barnburners' (such as Martin Van Buren), and the 'Hunkers', who favoured state banks and tempering the slavery issue. One such was Horatio Seymour, the Democratic presidential candidate who lost to Ulysses S Grant in 1868.

### Ghastly railcar tragedy

As the new President Pierce and family travelled to Washington on January 6, 1853, their train derailed killing their one last child, 11-year-old 'Benny'. Jane believed it to be God's retribution for her husband's ambition, while Franklin wondered, "How I shall be able to summon my manhood, and gather up my energies for the duties before me is hard to see."

### An Amiable Fellow

President Pierce liked to walk alone on the streets of Washington and socialise. He once told a stranger, "You need no introduction to [the White House], it is your house and I am but the tenant for a time." The only time that his safety was compromised was when a drunk man threw an egg at him. Pierce did not press charges.




James Buchanan had the nickname 'Ten cent Jimmy' after he said ten cents was fair daily pay for manual labourers

## 1857 – 1861

# James Buchanan

Regarded as one of history's biggest presidential failures, James Buchanan's ignorance of sectional conflict drove the country to civil war

Born into a well-to-do Pennsylvanian family, James Buchanan was well-educated in his youth, and after graduating with honours from Dickinson College - where he was nearly suspended for bad behaviour - he studied law. In 1812, he was admitted to the bar.

His long political career began when he was just 23, when he was elected as a member of the Federalist Party to the Pennsylvania House of Representatives. He later won a seat in the US House of Representatives, and come 1832, when Andrew Jackson was elected to his second term as president, Buchanan was appointed as his envoy to Russia - a move that some have argued later led indirectly to his election as president, and perhaps even to the outbreak of civil war.

In this role, Buchanan proved himself to be an adept diplomat, and so he was later appointed as minister to Great Britain by President Franklin Pierce. Slavery was becoming an increasingly

## The Dred Scott decision

The Dred Scott decision was pivotal legislation that significantly contributed to the worsening of sectional fighting in the period before civil war. The case, Dred Scott vs Sanford, was brought to the courts by African American slave Dred Scott, who had lived in the free state of Illinois and the free territory of Wisconsin before moving back to the slave state of Missouri. In his appeal he hoped to be granted freedom. The hearing was led by pro-slavery Chief Justice Roger B Taney, who declared that blacks "had no rights which the white man was bound to respect" and that they were not meant to be included in the Declaration of Independence. Abolitionists were outraged, and the decision propelled the issue of slavery even further into the political agenda.



divisive issue across the United States during this time, and Buchanan showed his sympathy for southerners, helping to block the Wilmot Proviso, which proposed banning slavery in any territory acquired from Mexico during the Mexican-American War. He also helped to draft the 1854 Ostend Manifesto, which outlined plans for America to acquire Cuba from Spain. While it was never acted upon, the proposal resulted in protests from anti-slavery northerners who feared Cuba would become a slave state. It was clear that Buchanan had absolutely no moral objection to slavery.

In 1854, President Pierce signed the Kansas-Nebraska Act, which made both into new territories and allowed settlers to decide for themselves whether theirs would be a free or slave state. Interpreted as political apathy, Pierce's support for the act meant he was overlooked for renomination, and in 1856 the Democrats chose James Buchanan as their presidential candidate - simply because he had been living abroad at the time of the controversial bill's signing and he'd had nothing to do with it. His perceived neutrality was designed to appeal to abolitionists and pro-slavery advocates alike.

However, in the general election Buchanan maintained that slavery was an issue to be decided by individual states and territories - the same stance that has cost Pierce his career. It was likely only because his Republican challenger John Fremont believed that slavery should be banned outright that Buchanan - on the back of support from the south - won the election.

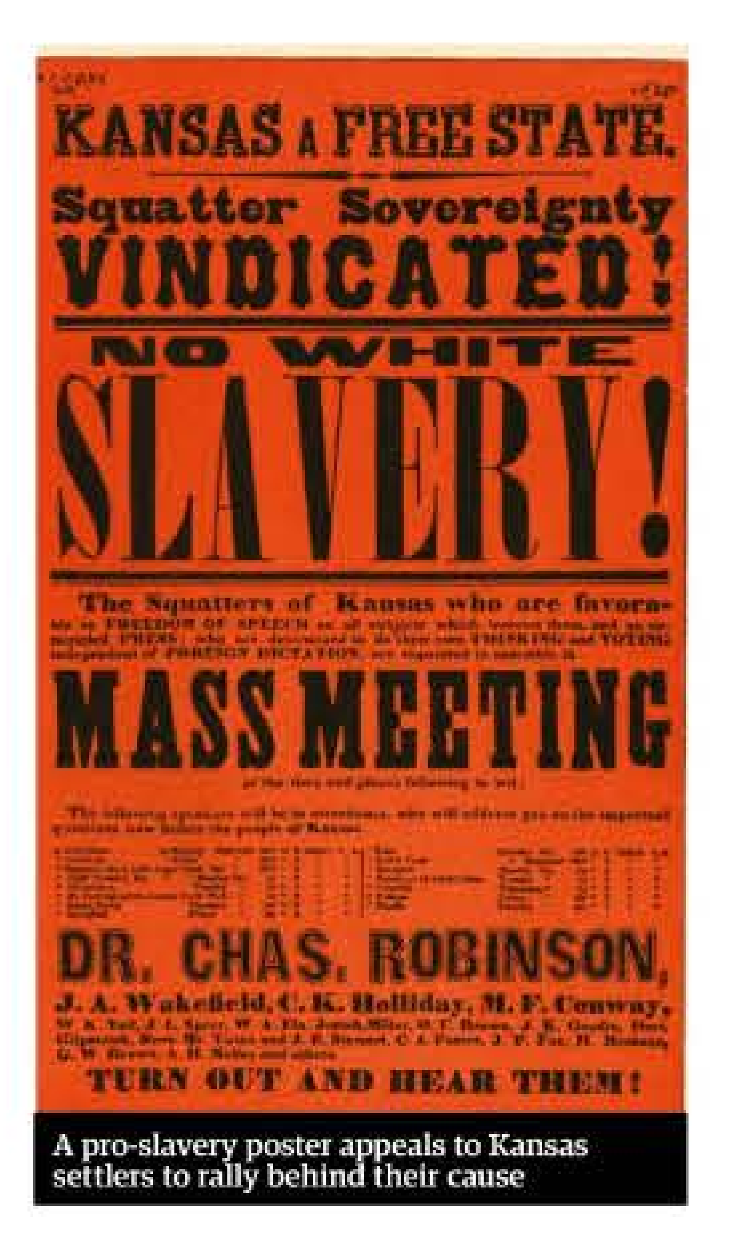
By the time Buchanan came to the White House, debates around slavery had reached unprecedented intensity, with both factions advocating violence and often resorting to it - a number of abolitionists had been murdered in Kansas, and in retaliation, five individuals associated with the pro-slavery party were massacred. Yet in his inaugural address, Buchanan again asserted that slavery was a matter for states and territories to decide, not the federal government, and concluded that the matter would be easily resolved both "speedily and finally" - remarks that historians argue indicate his fundamental misunderstanding of the issue at hand.

He appointed a cabinet of both northerners and southerners in the belief that this balance would help keep the peace, and two days after he was sworn in the US Supreme Court handed down its Dred Scott decision - legislation designed to end the debate once and for all - which stated that the federal government had no power to regulate slavery in the territories, and denied African Americans the rights of US citizens. Buchanan hoped the ruling would put the matter to rest, but it only served to escalate tensions, with southerners applauding the decision and northerners protesting in horror. He further upset the north by supporting the Lecompton Constitution, which would have allowed Kansas to become a slave state.

> Buchanan is the only president to have remained a bachelor his whole life. He was briefly engaged to a woman, but many historians believe he was gay

When Republicans won a plurality in the House in 1858, every significant bill they passed fell before southern votes in the Senate or a presidential veto. The Federal Government had reached a stalemate, and all Buchanan could do was tell states threatening secession that, while they had no legal right to do so, the government could not prevent them. He then resorted to a policy of inactivity, largely avoiding the escalating issue until the end of his term, where he left the White House with the nation on the brink of civil war.

In a bid to salvage his reputation, Buchanan published a memoir, *Mr Buchanan's Administration On The Eve Of Rebellion*, where he laid blame for his administration's failures on abolitionists and Republicans. The book was ignored, with all eyes by then on Buchanan's successor Abraham Lincoln, who had been left to clear up a frightening political mess.




A pro-slavery poster appeals to Kansas settlers to rally behind their cause

## Life in the time of James Buchanan

### Sectional danger

Sectional tensions were fraught during Buchanan's presidency, and violence between factions was common. Abolitionist John Brown tried unsuccessfully to stage a massive slave uprising in Virginia, resulting in his conviction of treason and death by hanging.

### Mod-cons become mainstream

Advances in technology meant homes became more comfortable, with the period seeing the invention of toilet paper and the electric stove, plus cleaning items such as the vacuum cleaner and dustpan.

### Transatlantic talk

Telecommunications saw an important milestone with the first trans-Atlantic telegraph cable. Buchanan inaugurated the creation with an exchange of greeting with Queen Victoria, but a weak signal meant the service was shut down in just a few weeks.

### The Postal Service

The Pony Express came into being in 1859, delivering for the first time messages, newspapers, mail and packages across the Great Plains, over the Rocky Mountains and from Sierra Nevada to Sacramento by horseback, using a series of relay stations.

### The Panic of 1857

Overexpansion of the domestic economy and a declining international economy plunged the world into the first global economic crisis in 1857. Banks in New York closed in October and didn't reopen until 12 December.

1861 – 1865

# Abraham Lincoln

## Politically, the president of a country waging war on itself ought to have failed, yet Abraham Lincoln is revered for his leadership

The bombardment began at 4.30am. Cannon batteries stationed around the harbour at Charleston in South Carolina launched salvo after salvo upon a small island fort. By 11am, a fifth of its buildings were on fire. Soon after midday, the fort's flagpole was struck, and 'Old Glory', the national flag of the United States, fell. For the structure under fire was Fort Sumter, a stronghold of the Federal Government in the first state to secede from the Union. The commander of the fort, Major Robert Anderson, had refused to surrender it to General PGT Beauregard of the Confederate army, and the cannons were lit. It was 12 April 1861. The American Civil War had begun.

The besieged fort remained under fire for 34 hours before Anderson surrendered. Somehow, no one perished in the actual attack. Yet, unmistakably, the forces of the Confederate States of America had opened fire on the forces of the United States of America. The nation was divided and at war with itself. How had it come to this?

During the Civil War, Lincoln would personally test fire rifle prototypes outside the White House

Perhaps it was inevitable given the contradiction between the words in the 1776 Declaration of Independence and the morality of those who wrote them. The Declaration stated that it was a "self-evident" truth that "all men are created equal." Yet its guiding author, Thomas Jefferson, and many other signatories were themselves slave owners. Indeed, the Constitution of 1787 permitted slavery. As many as eight presidents owned slaves while they were in office and many others in government were slaveholders.

However, opposition to slavery was growing on moral, political and religious grounds. Many of the Northern States had abolished it by 1800. It was soon to be outlawed by the British Empire, too. As the abolition movement grew, inhabitants of the Southern States took to defending slavery as a 'paternalistic' institution, and a 'positive good', even using biblical references in their arguments.

In reality, slavery in the South was the driving force of the region's economy. Plantation owners, particularly in the cotton fields, relied heavily upon slave labour. It wasn't going to be given up easily.

After the war with Mexico ended in 1848, the borders of the American Republic became finalised. Expansion into the new territories to the west began, but disputes about whether they should become free or slave states were fierce, and at times violent. Various compromises and short-term fixes gave some stability, but the ultimate problem was crystallised by a speech on 16 June 1858 in Springfield, Illinois. It was given by the newly formed Republican Party's candidate for the Illinois Senate seat. He argued: "A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure permanently, half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved. I do not expect this house to fall. But I do expect it will cease to be divided." The candidate's name was Abraham Lincoln.






## ABRAHAM LINCOLN

**Republican, 1809 - 1865**

*Brief Bio*

Born in rural Kentucky into relative poverty, Abraham Lincoln would go on to forge a successful career as a lawyer before eventually becoming one of the most celebrated leaders in US history. As president, he led the Union to victory in the American Civil War, abolishing slavery and reuniting the country. He was famously assassinated by John Wilkes Booth just months after being elected to a second term.

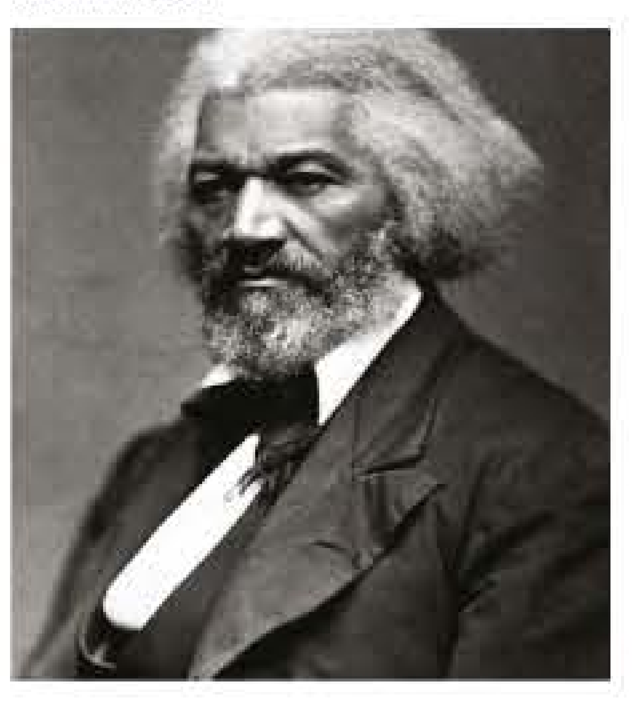
## Frederick Douglass and the Abolitionist Movement

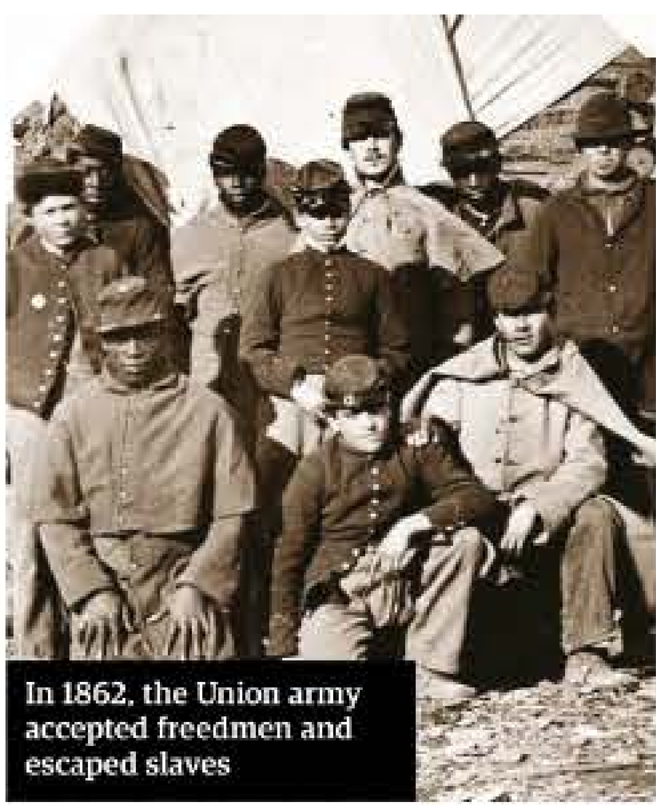
Born into slavery in 1818, Frederick Douglass escaped to become a leading campaigner to end the practice and a significant African-American leader of the 19th century.

The son of a slave woman and an unknown white man, Frederick took the surname Douglass after a second, and this time successful, escape from bondage. Living in New Bedford, Massachusetts, he married and became involved in the abolitionist movement, delivering moving lectures on the brutality of his upbringing.

Encouraged to write his autobiography, a powerful indictment of slavery, the book revealed he was a fugitive slave, forcing him to flee to England. Supporters 'purchased' his freedom, allowing Douglass to return in 1847. He quickly set up an anti-slavery newspaper, which continued under various names until 1863.

During the civil war, Douglass lobbied for African-Americans to be allowed to fight. After the Emancipation Proclamation, he recruited for the 54th Massachusetts Infantry, the first regiment of black soldiers. At war's end, he turned to campaigning for black rights, going on to hold several government posts before his death in 1895.





In 1862, the Union army accepted freedmen and escaped slaves



Lincoln meets with the Union's military leaders, including General George McClellan at their headquarters in Maryland in 1862

Born in 1809 to a poor Kentucky farming family, Lincoln was raised in a single-room log cabin. With minimal formal education, he virtually taught himself, later earning a living through various manual jobs. After the Lincoln family moved to Illinois, he applied his mind to learning the law, eventually passing the bar exam in 1836. Lincoln made enough of a success of his profession to earn a good living. He married Mary Todd, the daughter of a wealthy Kentucky slaveholder, in 1846 and later served a single term in the House of Representatives as a Whig party member. The Whigs, though, were a waning political force. A new grouping, the Republicans, which opposed the extension of slavery to the newer states, appealed to Lincoln. He joined them in 1856. Within the space of two years, he was selected as the Republican Party's Illinois nomination for the US Senate.

To date, Lincoln is the only president to obtain a patent

Lincoln's opponent was the sitting US senator of the Democrat Party Stephen Douglas. The pair contested seven debates, which were extensively reported in newspapers across the country. Lincoln's closely argued proposition of prohibiting the extension of slavery in the new territories frequently forced Douglas on to the back foot. Despite that, Douglas prevailed when the state legislature (which at that time elected US senators) voted 54-46 in the Democrat's favour. However, the positions Douglas had adopted in countering Lincoln's arguments angered his party's members in the Southern States, which later proved costly.



The 54th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment at the Second Battle of Fort Wagner



An 1860 electoral map of the United States. Republican states are red, Southern Democrats green, Northern Democrats blue and Constitutional Unionists orange

In contrast, despite losing the Senate race, Lincoln won widespread acclaim as an eloquent debater for Republican values. When his party sought a candidate to run for president in 1860, it turned to the poor farmer's boy from Kentucky.

The belief was that as a moderate candidate, Lincoln could win in Pennsylvania and the Mid-west States. He was not an abolitionist, like some more radical members of his party, and he pledged not to interfere with slavery in the Southern States. Indeed, he felt the Constitution prohibited any attempt to do so. Yet he had always been against slavery, labelling it wrong both morally and politically. His fervent hope was that it would become extinct over time as states moved to reject it. Crucially, however, he was firm in his opposition to allowing it to spread to the new territories.

Meanwhile, as if seeking to test the view that 'a house divided cannot stand', the Democrats split into North and South when choosing a presidential candidate. Those in the North championed Lincoln's Senate adversary Stephen Douglas. Democrats in the South, though, remained hostile to him. Hardening their position, they selected then current vice-president John Breckinridge, a staunch pro-slavery man, to also stand.

With slightly less than 40 per cent of the national vote, Lincoln garnered enough state electoral votes to become the Union's 16th president. Yet in the Southern States, where his name often didn't even appear on the ballot paper, hardly anyone voted for him. Fuelled by a sense of unfairness, within days of Lincoln's victory South Carolina organised a secession convention. On 20 December 1860, the state left the Union.

Before the new president's inauguration on 4 March 1861, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana and Texas also seceded. The seven declared themselves a new nation called The Confederate States of America. It even had a president in place, Jefferson Davis, before Lincoln had actually taken office.

Yet when he did, the 16th president's inauguration speech set out very clearly what was at stake. "In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war," he cautioned. Lincoln stated unequivocally that his government would not orchestrate an invasion of the Confederacy, but if Union outposts in it came under attack, he was duty bound as president to act in their defence. "You can have no conflict," the speech continued, "without yourselves being the aggressors." And so they proved to be at Fort Sumter. Perhaps inevitably, then, war it was.

**Lincoln signed legislation creating the US Secret Service on the very same day that he was assassinated**

Four more states - Virginia, Arkansas, North Carolina and Tennessee - quickly joined the other rebels, making it 11 against the Union's 23. The act of firing upon the flag was seen as treasonous, even by Lincoln's Democrat adversaries like Douglas, and after the fall of Old Glory at Fort Sumter, the North now had a reason to go to war. Its aim was to put an end to secession and save the Union. The South's objective was far simpler: it merely needed to survive.

The Confederacy was suffering from a much smaller population and was massively weaker in terms of industrial power and financial resources. Taken together, these factors pointed to a war that was going to be a long struggle. Both sides needed to call on large numbers of volunteers to form their armies. Leading them were officers from the pre-war US Army Military Academy at West Point. A significant number of the more able were from the South, and many resigned their commissions in order to fight for the Confederate cause.

This presented Lincoln with a problem. His general-in-chief, Winfield Scott, was a 75-year-old veteran on the verge of retirement, and there was no obvious successor. One contender was Brigadier General Irwin McDowell, who led the Union army

"Lincoln won widespread acclaim as an eloquent debater for Republican values"

in the war's earliest major clash, the First Battle of Bull Run in Virginia. To begin with, this confusing conflict between two virtually new armies of limited training appeared to be going McDowell's way, but stubborn Confederate resistance turned it into a humiliating Union defeat.

With McDowell's star waning, General George McClellan was promoted to general-in-chief when Scott retired. Arrogant and ambitious, McClellan clashed with his political superiors in Washington, and while he trained the army well through the winter, he didn't deliver decisive battlefield victories. McClellan's tactical caution was in stark contrast to the aggressive instincts of Confederate commanders like Robert E Lee. When the pair clashed at the Battle of Antietam in September 1862, McClellan's force outnumbered Lee's by almost two to one. In ferocious combat – in terms of casualties, it was the costliest day of fighting in American history – the Confederates were driven back to Virginia, but Lincoln was left frustrated that the retreating army was not vigorously pursued. He sacked McClellan two months later.

Conflicts with his generals were a feature of Lincoln's early years in the White House. With war imminent, he read voraciously on military theory. He sought to be an involved commander-in-chief, going far beyond visits to troops and military hospitals to raise the moral to advocating strategy on how the war should be fought. Initially, this came in the form of his Memorandum on Military Policy, which he wrote in the wake of the First Battle of Bull Run debacle. By January 1862, Lincoln was articulating how the land war could be won: by using the Union's superior numbers to attack simultaneously across a broad number of fronts, forcing breakthroughs when the enemy moved forces to secure pressure points, and at the same time engaging and defeating the enemy armies wherever possible rather than trying to occupy or capture specific places. Lincoln's difficulty was in finding generals who thought like he did.

Still, Antietam was claimed as a Union victory, and following it, Lincoln seized the opportunity to confront the issue of slavery. At war's onset, he had maintained its purpose was to save the Union and pledged to leave the institution of slavery unaffected in the Southern States. Lincoln believed he wasn't able to challenge state-sanctioned servitude under the Constitution, which kept the important border slave states of Missouri, Kentucky, Maryland and Delaware loyal to the Union.

However, as the war unfolded, slavery's effects couldn't be ignored, as they were damaging the Union campaign. Slaves were used to construct defences for the Confederate armies, while slave work on farms and plantations kept the South's economy going, allowing more of the white population to fight. Determined to affect the balance of the war, Lincoln issued the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation in September 1862.

The timing had to be right. Lincoln himself had already been forced to quash military decree emancipations made by several Union generals, because he believed only the president, through constitutionally sanctioned war powers, could enforce emancipation. He was also anxious about public opinion, fearing that if he moved too soon, not enough people in the North would support him, or that he might lose those important border states. It was knife-edge politics, but Lincoln judged that, just five days after the Union victory at Antietam, the time was right to press home the advantage and further undermine the Confederate war effort with the Proclamation.

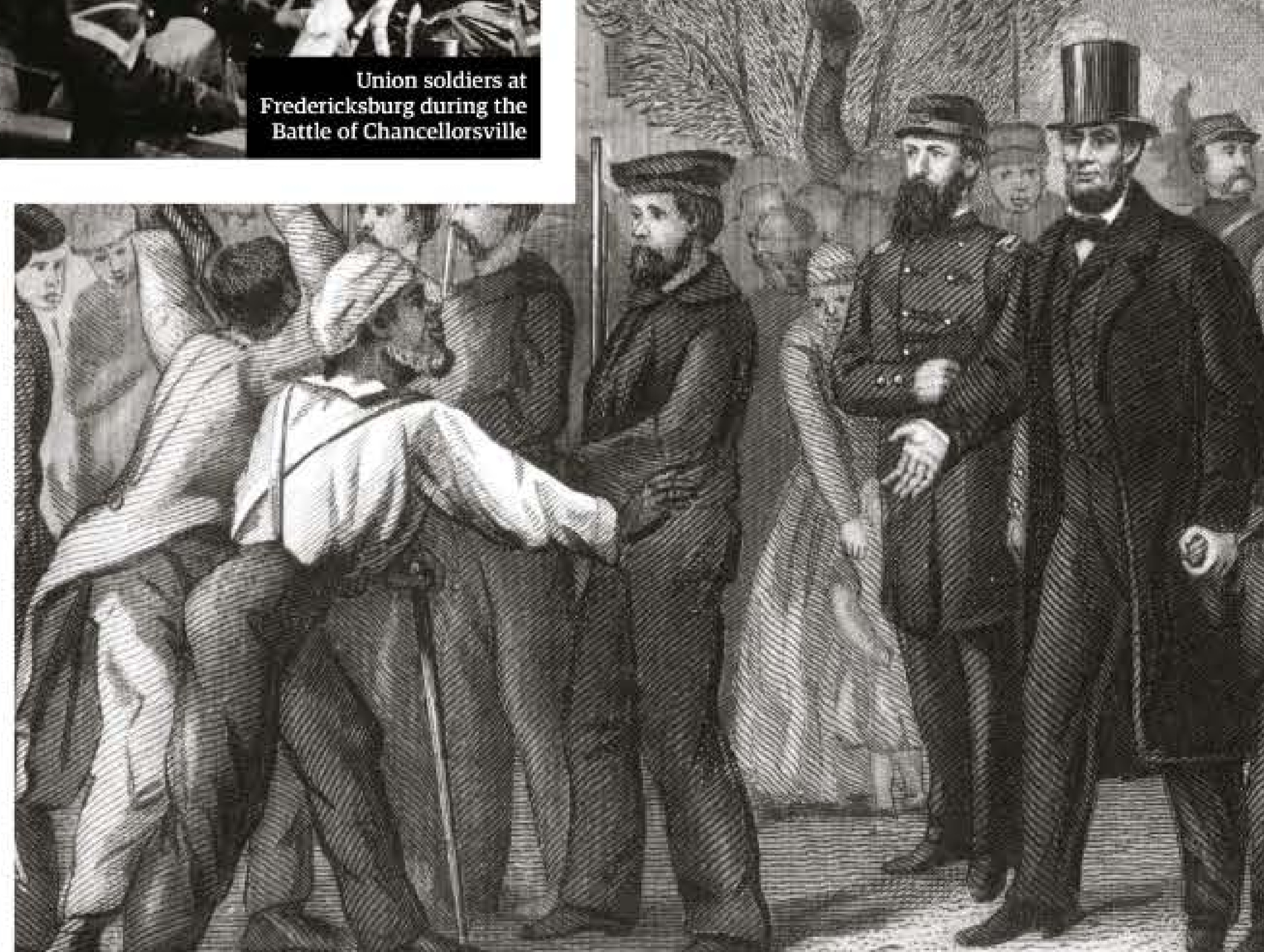
The document offered terms for the rebel states to return to the Union provided they agreed to begin arrangements to end slavery, but if they failed to do so by 1 January 1863, all slaves in those states



Union soldiers at Fredericksburg during the Battle of Chancellorsville



Cherokee Confederates at a reunion in New Orleans in 1903

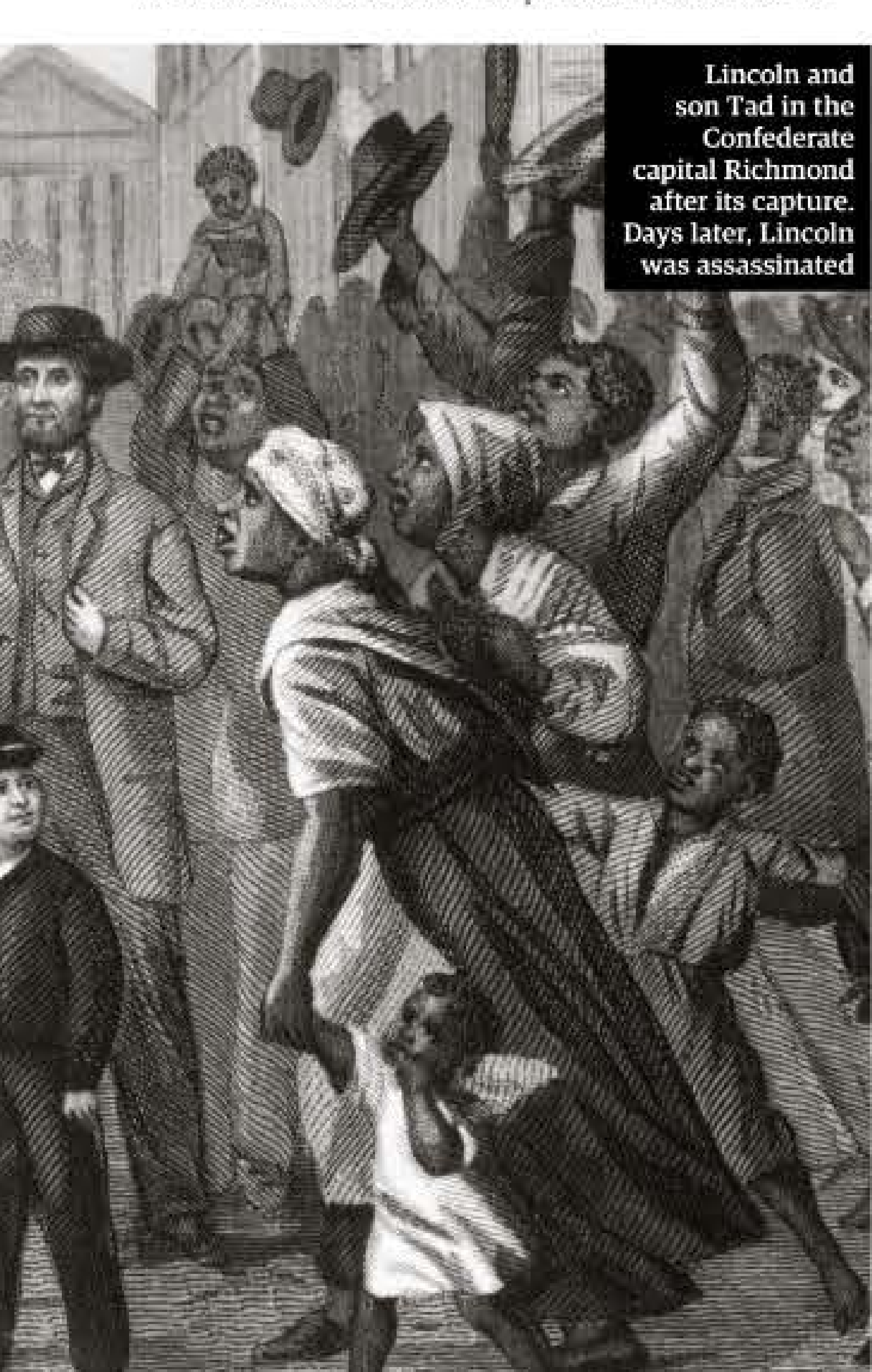


would be set free forever. As such a move would harm the Confederacy, the president argued it was a legitimate war measure that was both necessary and just. When, as anticipated, the rebel states ignored the Preliminary Proclamation, Lincoln was able to issue the Final Proclamation on the first day of 1863. "I never in my life felt more certain that I am doing right than I do in signing this paper," he said on putting his name to the document. He was sure, and there was considerable hope in the Union that it would hasten the end of the conflict.

The Emancipation Proclamation also had two other important effects. First, it brought a moral dimension to the war. Always an opponent of slavery on grounds of morality, Lincoln had now shifted the aim of the war from being not just about preserving the Union, but to setting people free. While personally important to Lincoln, this was also vital internationally, as the Confederacy had hoped to secure support from Europe. Yet France and the British Empire, where slavery had been outlawed since 1833, could not legitimately be seen to support a slave-holding republic against a nation embarked on setting slaves free.

Second, the Proclamation allowed for freedmen to enlist in the Union army. This, coupled with a surge of African-American volunteers already free in the North, offered a timely and welcome boost in manpower. It paved the way for the United States Colored Troops, which became a significant component of the Union armies.

However, the Proclamation only freed slaves in the states still outside the Union. To go further, Lincoln needed the affirmation of a second election victory, but in the first half of 1864, that didn't seem likely. The war was costing so many lives on both sides that Republican radicals felt



Lincoln and son Tad in the Confederate capital Richmond after its capture. Days later, Lincoln was assassinated

# Union Generals

**Identifying the right man to command Union forces on the ground and fight the campaign he envisaged proved challenging and frustrating for the president**



### ULYSSES S GRANT

**Highest rank:** General-in-Chief of Union armies
**Appointed:** March 1864
★★★★★
After successful raids on forts in Tennessee, Grant was promoted to major general. He was almost routed at Shiloh but retrieved the situation, then further distinguished himself at Vicksburg. He took charge of all Union forces, confronting and finally defeating Lee in Virginia.



### GEORGE MEADE

**Highest Rank:** Major General, Army of the Potomac
**Appointed:** August 1864
★★★☆☆
Despite taking command only days before, Meade defeated Lee at Gettysburg, yet he was heavily criticised for not pursuing the retreating force. Guided by Grant, he led the Army of the Potomac successfully in later campaigns, later earning the rank of major general.



### JOSEPH HOOKER

**Highest rank:** Major General, Army of the Potomac
**Appointed:** January 1863
★★★☆☆
Hooker revitalised the army, restoring morale. However, after successes prior to his appointment when he was dubbed 'Fighting Joe', he endured a chequered career in battle afterwards, and never fully recovered from heavy defeat and retreat at Chancellorsville.

### GEORGE McCLELLAN

**Highest rank:** General-in-Chief of Union armies
**Appointed:** November 1861
★☆☆☆☆
Although he reorganised the Union army, turning volunteers into an efficient force, McClellan was cripplingly cautious on the battlefield. Failure to exploit advantages frustrated Lincoln, who lost patience and relieved him of command in November 1862.



### WILLIAM SHERMAN

**Highest rank:** Major General, overseeing the Union's western armies
**Appointed:** March 1864
★★★★☆
Sherman was promoted to brigadier general after the First Battle of Bull Run, but he suffered a nervous breakdown. After being reinstated, he then led the capture of Atlanta. He waged 'total war' through Georgia and the Carolinas.

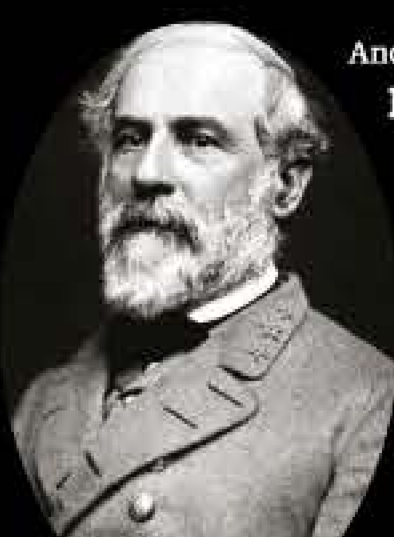
### WINFIELD SCOTT

**Highest Rank:** General-in-Chief of Union armies
**Appointed:** February 1855, retired November 1861
★★★☆☆
Aged 75 as the conflict began, Scott was unable to take field command, nevertheless he devised the strategy of blockading the South's ports and raiding down the Mississippi. Although rejected, the North triumphed using similar tactics.



### AMBROSE BURNSIDE

**Highest rank:** Major General, Army of the Potomac
**Appointed:** November 1862
★★☆☆☆
When he finally replaced McClellan, Burnside attacked but lost expensively at Fredericksburg. Relieved of command, he resurfaced to outwit General Longstreet in Tennessee, but failed badly again at the Battle of Crater.



And one that got away...

### ROBERT E LEE

**Highest Rank:** General-in-Chief of Confederate armies
**Appointed:** February 1865
★★★★★
Lee declined the command of Union forces in April 1861, claiming he was unable to fight fellow Virginians. Becoming a Confederate General, Lee commanded the Army of North Virginia, and later all Confederate forces.



| Civil War Performance | ★★★★★ | ★★★★☆ | ★★★☆☆ | ★★☆☆☆ | ★☆☆☆☆ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Superb | Effective | Mixed | Disappointing | Poor |

# Lincoln's Vices & Virtues

## Virtues

### Arch politician

Aided by stunning speech-making, Lincoln was as skilled a political operator as there has ever been. His genius lay in courting different opinions, often at odds with his own, then setting a course, and bringing those of differing views along with him.

### Forbearance

President Lincoln set off along a difficult, painful path with an iron resolve. He faced criticism and scorn from many quarters but he did not waver, believing the cause of protecting the Union was a duty he had to accomplish.

### A hands-on leader

From strategic planning to appointing or dismissing generals, Lincoln was an active, interventionist commander-in-chief during the civil war. Furthermore, he was also equally busy in attending units of active soldiers to raise moral, or visiting the wounded in hospitals.

### Honesty

Acquiring the moniker 'Honest Abe' from his days as a young storekeeper, it stuck with Lincoln through his career as a lawyer and later in the White House. His integrity informed both friend and foe alike exactly where they stood with him.

### Humour

There was a lighter side to Lincoln. He told stories, yarns, jokes and anecdotes throughout his life to win over audiences, to illustrate certain points, and sometimes just to lighten the mood in cabinet before facing up to important decisions.

## Vices

### "The vision thing"

George Bush Senior's remark was about his inability to articulate ideas to shape the nation. Lincoln, by his own words, was similarly inhibited when he wrote: "I claim not to have controlled events, but confess plainly that events have controlled me."

### Race and colonisation

For far too long, Lincoln clung stubbornly to his political hero Henry Clay's views on racial separation via colonisation. Perhaps the lack of vision contributed, but for such a practical politician, it was an extraordinarily impractical solution to support.

### Civil rights

Lincoln exercised unprecedented executive power at the onset of the war, including suspending habeas corpus and shutting down opposition newspapers. His measures drew criticism not only from opponents and but also some supporters, who feared he had exceeded his authority.

### Foolhardiness with his own safety

Warned of assassination plots against him, Lincoln shunned the use of bodyguards. He frequently rode alone at night, and was shot in August 1864. He escaped injury, though his stovepipe hat was later found holed by a musket ball.

### Remoteness

For a man capable of working with politicians of many different views, Lincoln made few close friends. He allowed people to get only so close, being variously described as "not a social man by any means" and even "secretive."




Lincoln finally found the general he wanted in Ulysses S Grant, who later became president himself



A depiction of the confused fighting at the First Battle of Bull Run, the first large-scale confrontation of the war

# "Lincoln wrestled with the issue of what effect freeing millions of black people would have on race relations"

the president had mismanaged the conflict and were lobbying for a different candidate, while rebel state armies were proving stubbornly resistant. A small Confederate force led by General Jubal Early even launched an audacious attack on Washington, DC in July. They got close and caused panic in the capital. Lincoln sought to quell it by being a visible presence, facing down the crisis with visits to fortifications on the edge of the city. Observing some skirmishing from the parapet of Fort Stevens, he came under sniper fire until extolled to climb down, earning the distinction of the only wartime commander-in-chief to be directly shot at by the enemy.

By that time, though, Lincoln had a general-in-chief he could rely on after he appointed Ulysses S Grant earlier in the year. Union strength finally began to show with crucial battlefield successes in August and September, turning the election tide in Lincoln's favour. He faced his sacked general, McClellan, for the Democrats, who were still split between those wanting a swift peace and pro-war moderates like McClellan himself. Lincoln triumphed emphatically.

A major policy plank of the Republican Party's re-election campaign was to amend the Constitution to permanently ban slavery across the country. Vindicated by his election victory, Lincoln moved swiftly to bring the Thirteenth Amendment into being. It took skilled political manoeuvring but Lincoln convinced the outgoing 38th Congress to give it bipartisan support, and the amendment was passed on 31 January 1865.

Unquestionably, however, Lincoln also wrestled with the issue of what effect freeing millions of black people would have on race relations in the nation. Part of his Preliminary Proclamation referred to voluntary colonisation abroad for those set free. This was dropped from the Final Proclamation, and Lincoln never spoke publicly about the issue again, leaving historians to debate his motives. Some suggest coupling freeing slaves with colonisation was a ploy to help sell emancipation to doubters. Others argue that, given Union ranks were set to be swelled by black recruits, he changed his view on the issue.

Both opinions essentially give the president a pass on the colonisation policy, but recent evidence has come to light suggesting he never fully abandoned it. In *Colonisation After Emancipation: Lincoln And The Movement For Black Resettlement*, authors Phillip Magness and Sebastian Page have discovered evidence that the president was still attempting to make colonisation arrangements long after the Final Proclamation. Their research reveals that in addition to the colonies he hoped to set up in Panama, Haiti and Liberia, the president was in extensive secretive discussions with the British government to find further suitable lands in the West Indies. The authors suggest that Lincoln was actively pursuing the policy far longer than has previously been acknowledged, potentially into 1865.

Private Edwin Francis Jemison came to represent child soldiers of the war

The idea of voluntary colonisation took shape in 1816 with the formation of the American Colonisation Society. Bluntly, the view was that as slaves had been stolen from abroad, once emancipated they should be humanely returned abroad. One of the society's founders was Henry Clay, leader of the Whig party and a political hero of Lincoln's. Clay's views profoundly influenced the president's ideas, apparently to the extent that on the issue of colonisation, he appears never to have fully revised them.

In his defence, even the best of men are not immune from alighting upon the wrong answer, and nobody knew what a post-civil war, post-slavery USA would look like. Lincoln, seeking to avoid extensive racial disharmony and searching for a way forward, thought consented colonisation might offer a solution. While a miscalculated, impractical and embarrassingly paternalistic solution in hindsight, everything else we know about him tells us he wouldn't have suggested it through malice.

As events transpired, Lincoln never got to see post-civil war USA himself. Grant's tactics of attacking across a wide front created advances deep into Confederate territory. Once Atlanta fell to General Sherman in September 1864, he pushed on to the coast, slicing Georgia in two. The following April, after a nine-month campaign, Grant's army pierced Lee's resistance at Petersburg. The Confederate capital of Richmond fell soon after. His troops exhausted and heavily outnumbered, Lee had no option but to surrender on 9 April 1865. Five nights later, Lincoln visited Ford Theatre in Washington, where Confederate sympathiser John Wilkes Booth assassinated him with a single bullet to the head. By June, the last unit of Confederate troops had lain down their arms. The civil war was over, though the president who felt compelled to fight it was not alive to construct its peace.

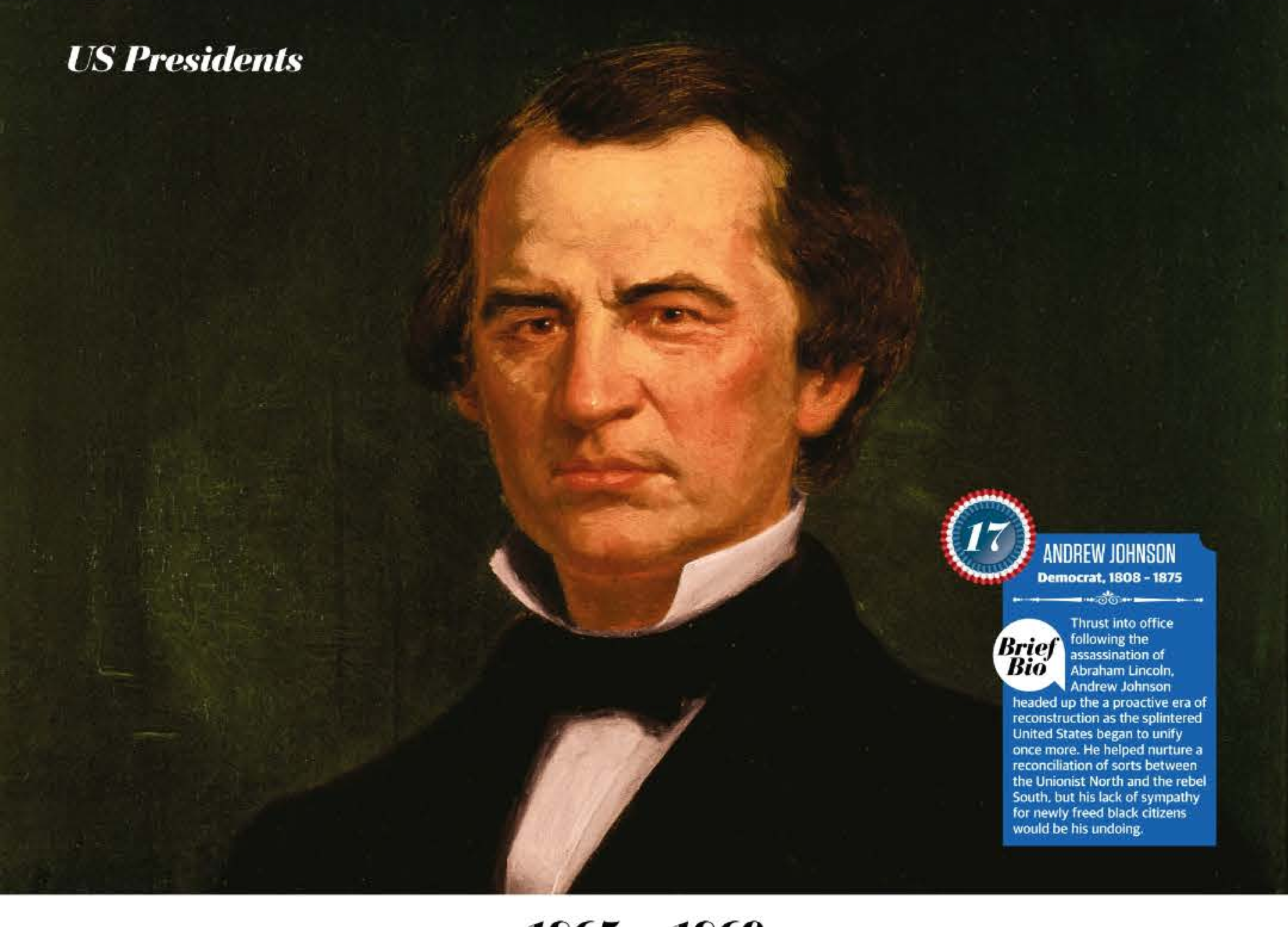
## Expert Opinion

## Was Lincoln the Greatest US President Ever?

LOUIS P. MASUR — LINCOLN'S LAST SPEECH — WARTIME RECONSTRUCTION & THE CRISIS OF REUNION

**Louis P Masur is a distinguished professor of American studies and history at Rutgers University and the author of numerous acclaimed books including Lincoln's Last Speech: Wartime Reconstruction And The Crisis Of Reunion, Lincoln's Hundred Days: The Emancipation Proclamation And The War For Union, and The Civil War: A Concise History.**

Washington and Lincoln. One made the nation and the other saved it. For me, Lincoln is the greatest president not only for what he did - defend democracy, preserve the Union, issue the Emancipation Proclamation and lay the foundations for a modernising, industrial USA - but also for the qualities of leadership he exhibited. Lincoln was patient, deliberate, a shrewd judge of character, and most important of all willing to change his mind over time. "The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present," he declared. With actions and words that continue to inspire, he led the nation through war to peace and set the framework for a "new birth of freedom." 150 years after his death, his legacy continues to bear fruit.




*1865 – 1869*

# Andrew Johnson

## Inheriting the office in the wake of war and assassination, Andrew Johnson had to head up the reconstruction of an entire nation

Like many living in the infancy of a nation's fledgling history, Andrew Johnson was born into a poor family that struggled to survive on meagre earnings. His mother apprenticed him off to a local tailor at the age of ten and he worked the trade diligently until he turned 21. It wasn't an easy upbringing, but growing up in a log cabin would later pay dividends in his political career, his humble origins proving a boon when appealing to impoverished voters.

It was here in the tailoring business that Johnson began his first foray into politics. An animated debater, his shop became a haven for political discussions and Johnson's staunch support of working class rights soon him elected as an alderman in 1829 and was elected mayor of Gainesville five years later. Following the bloody Nat Turner Rebellion of 1831, Tennessee adopted a new state constitution that served to alienate and disenfranchise its free black citizens. Johnson was a staunch traditionalist and supported the concept of slavery so his full support of the provision gained him even more political support from powerful white families.

Johnson's political career had reached a far grander stage and he eventually became the first Tennessee Democrat to be elected to the US Congress. Johnson was a product of his upbringing and remained stringently anti-abolitionist (meaning he was opposed to the idea of banning slavery) while campaigning for ideals of populism (a style of government that protected all citizens, rich or poor).

Johnson soon came to the attention of the Lincoln Administration, but it was once again because of his staunch refusal to back down on his political ideals. When Lincoln became president in 1860, Tennessee became one of the 11 states to secede from the Union, and Johnson became the only Democrat to break away from the state's decision and remain in the Senate. His decision made him a hate figure in his home state and effectively turned Johnson and his family into political pariahs.

When Lincoln presented the Emancipation Proclamation (a law that would effectively end slavery in the US) in 1863, Johnson initially opposed it, but when he managed to negotiate an exemption of sorts for Tennessee he soon backed the law as a practical means to end the bloody Civil War. Many branded Johnson a glory-hunting traitor, and those critics felt justified when Lincoln chose Johnson as the vice president during his campaign for re-election in 1864. Controversial as it might have been, the meeting of two sides worked and Lincoln remained in office.

> Johnson was born into a poor and near illiterate family and didn't learn to write properly until he was 18

And then everything changed. On 14 April, 1865, Lincoln was shot while attending the theatre in Washington, DC and he died the next morning. Johnson was also a target that night, but his own assassin failed to show. A few hours later, Johnson was sworn into office and found himself the 17th president of the United States and the most powerful man in the country - a country still at war with itself. Lincoln's death helped end the conflict and Johnson now had to head up the 'Reconstruction Era', the process of reunifying the nation and addressing the fallout of the conflict.

A Southerner, and a man skewed by his traditionalist views on race, Johnson unsurprisingly treated the former rebels with a gentle touch. Rebels that swore the Oath of Allegiance were immediately granted amnesty, enabling them to return to positions of power back in those seceded states. These confederates then enforced 'black codes' that forced legally free black citizens back into servitude.

Congress was out of session when Johnson became president, so many of his actions went unhindered. Many Unionists were outraged at the president's soft touch and failure to protect black rights and when Congress reconvened eight months later, it passed the Freedmen's Bureau bill and the Civil Rights Act, which recognised every citizen as equal, protecting the rights of former slaves. Johnson attempted to veto both pieces of legislation, but Congress swiped his opposition down.

And so began Johnson's slow downfall. Congress passed the Tenure Of Office Act, which removed the president's power to remove officials from office without congressional agreement. It then began a phase known as 'military reconstruction' where the cruel emancipation of the 'black codes' were forcibly disbanded and black rights finally protected at ground level. All of these changes and more on top of them publicly undermined Johnson's position.

During the congressional elections of 1866, Johnson conducted a series of public rallies, but he attended most of them half-drunk and caused irreparable damage to his public persona. His political and public profiles already burning, Johnson was defiant to the end and decided to challenge the Tenure of Office Act head on. He fired secretary of war Edwin Stanton in August 1867 and the House of Representatives was forced to take unprecedented action and impeach the president for bringing disgrace and ridicule on the government. Ultimately, Johnson would be acquitted by a single vote, but the damage was done.

By the time he finished his term, Johnson remained fully opposed to the altered Reconstruction orders, but his power and influence as president had evaporated with his impeachment. When he eventually returned to Tennessee, the once-ostracised Johnson was hailed as something of a homegrown hero. He would remain there until his death on 31 July 1875.

## Presidential reconstruction: life after the Civil War

Following Lincoln's assassination, Johnson found himself the president of a country still raw from domestic conflict. The Unionist North had won the war and wanted the Southern rebel states that had seceded punished accordingly. This process of 'reconstruction' began by with two proclamations: Virginia would be accepted back into the Union with Republican Francis Pierpont as governor and provided amnesty for all rebels who didn't own considerable holdings. These acts were approved by the North, even though Johnson did little to act against black suffrage. That area would cause the biggest issue as states in the South began to impose 'black codes' that effectively reinstated slavery.



Despite his fall from grace, Johnson was successfully elected to the Senate for a second time in 1874

## Life in the time of Andrew Johnson

### A lack of equality

Slavery may have been abolished by Lincoln, but for many citizens their lives of subjugation barely changed. Johnson's initial beliefs that slaves were not constitutionally 'created equal' gave powerful Southern state landowners all the room they needed to impose 'black codes' that reinstated slavery in all but name.

### Destroyed fortunes

The unprecedented violence of the Civil War had ravaged the land, and the plantations and holdings held by landowners - especially in the South - had suffered greatly. For those still reeling from the illegality of the slave trade, the ability to harvest and farm was now just as difficult.

### Economic downturn

Following the war, the American economy was in disarray and continued to worsen for many years to come. Sharecropping (smaller groups of farmers working together) became a common practice, and most turned to local merchants rather than big city companies for trade.

### A nation divided

Now that the war was over, the government had to deal with the task of unifying the country once more. A total of 11 states seceded (broke away) from the Union. Each one was slowly introduced back into Union, but the division between Confederate and Unionist remained.

### Frontier life

Years before, the US government had purchased two thirds of the country's land from France. As a result, most of the country was uncharted terrain full of unknown regions, countless native peoples and resources such as gold and furs just waiting to be tapped.



18

ULYSSES S GRANT

Republican, 1822 - 1885

**Brief Bio** Placed in command of all US armies in 1864, Grant worked closely alongside Abraham Lincoln to lead the Union to victory against the Confederacy in the Civil War. In 1868 he became the youngest president, aged 46. Although he was dazzling on the battlefield, his presidency was rocked by multiple scandals that overshadowed his successes, such as his work for African American citizenship.

A clerical error caused Grant to change his name - the US Military Academy incorrectly listed him, and he feared rejection if his name did not match

*1869 – 1877*

# Ulysses S Grant

## The military mastermind who claimed victory on the field, but struggled to survive in the White House

Ulysses S Grant was not born a president. He wasn't naturally gifted, he didn't work his way up from nothing and equally he wasn't born into riches; Grant was ordinary, but he would change the United States forever.

Born in Point Pleasant, Ohio, Grant was the oldest son of tanner Jesse Grant, and his wife Hannah Grant. His parents were hardworking, religious people and Grant was the first of six children. Although his father was an outgoing and entrepreneurial businessman, Grant took after his quiet, reserved mother. These qualities caused him to be overlooked, or even deemed 'useless' in his youth. He was not particularly gifted at school, but instead excelled at one skill - horsemanship. Grant honed this skill working on his father's farm, and although Jesse was keen for his oldest son to take over his tannery business, he understood that Grant's talents lay elsewhere. When Grant was aged 17, his father applied for his son to attend the United States Military Academy at West Point for free, in return for army service upon graduation; he was accepted.

Although he was shy and reluctant, Grant was persuaded to attend. But the timid boy struggled at the school, he had limited education and was deemed entirely unremarkable, save for his skill with horses, which outmatched all his classmates. He eventually graduated 21st out of 39. With no

## The long depression

Although many Americans experienced prosperity in the period following the war, what followed was a severe period of recession. When the country's major investment banker, Jay Cooke and Company fell, it had a knock-on effect on the stock exchange, other banks and eventually cost thousands of people their jobs. Railroads failed, families were left destitute and people were looking for someone to blame. Grant, as president, faced overwhelming criticism from the public who dubbed him and his administration wholly responsible for mishandling the economy. Although the factors of the depression were varied, complex and lay not entirely at Grant's feet, the public unrest and loss of trust dented the war hero's armour irrevocably.



plans for military greatness, he decided to serve his four years, then resign.

In the 1840s the United States army was small, but despite his unremarkable school record, Grant was cited for his gallantry and heroism during his service in the Mexican-American War. It was shortly before this that he met his future life, Julia Dent, forming the most enduring relationship of his life. The couple went on to have four children, but due to Grant's military career he had little interaction with them. Growing bitter about the war, Grant attempted to launch several businesses, which failed horrifically, and rumours about his drinking began to circulate. It is believed that an altercation linked to his drinking in 1853 is what prompted him to resign the following year.

However, life away from the army was not what Grant expected. He struggled to make a living by attempting to farm some land given to them by Julia's father. He further failed with a real estate venture and found it difficult to find employment elsewhere. With four children to support, he could barely make enough money to keep food on the table and was forced to return to the tannery business he hated in order to provide for them.

Grant's life would change forever, however, when the Civil War broke out. The North were desperate for experienced officers and Grant was appointed to lead a voluntary regiment that others had struggled to train. Employing the skills he learned during the Mexican-American war, Grant gradually disciplined the regiment, earned the respect of his men and had them combat-ready in less than a year. Grant led his regiment to some of the most significant victories of the early years of the war at Fort Henry and Fort Donelson, and was promoted to brigadier general as a result.

Although he was now drawing praise, a surprise attack at the Battle of Shiloh devastated Grant's forces, and prompted many to call for his removal. However, Lincoln was convinced in Grant's abilities and said "I can't spare this man. He fights." The very next day Grant regrouped his men and defeated the Confederates. However, it was his victory at Vicksburg, Mississippi that would be most significant. After 46 days of siege warfare, the enemy surrendered, and the Union gained control of the crucial Mississippi river, a strategic masterpiece by Grant. "Grant is my man, and I am his," declared Lincoln.

By this point Grant was in control of the entire Western theatre of the war, winning victory after victory for the Union. By 1864 he was named lieutenant general and commander of all Union forces. Although rumours of his drinking continued to haunt him through his military career, by the end of the Civil War Grant was the United States' military hero, having chased General Lee to defeat and accepting his surrender.

In the post-war years Grant served as secretary of war, and although he saw eye to eye with Lincoln, the relationship between Grant and his successor, Johnson was not quite so harmonious. In 1868 Grant was voted the Republican candidate for office and won the presidency with a huge majority of 214 to 80 votes.

Grant's achievements in office were remarkable for the time, he pushed through ratification of the 15th amendment, established the national parks service and won passage of the Ku Klux Klan act. However, he had difficulty enforcing the civil rights laws he so passionately believed in, and his successes were overshadowed by almost constant scandals involving his elected officials. This corruption drove Grant to despair and caused him to utter, "Failures have been errors of judgement, not of intent."

Upon departing the White House, Grant's life was anything but stable. He continued to struggle with civilian life, and when he became a co-owner in a financial firm, his partner secretly embezzled investors' money and Grant was left bankrupt. Penniless and now dying of throat cancer, Grant relied on the one thing that had catapulted him to success - his military career. He recounted tales of his military life to magazines, and when they sold well, struck a deal with his friend, novelist Mark Twain, to publish his memoirs. The books were hugely successful, selling 300,000 copies and earning Grant's family $450,000. Grant did not live to see the triumph of his memoirs, but the success provided security to the family he was so devoted to, and remain a classic of American literature.



Future president Grant photographed with his wife and son, circa 1864

## Life in the time of Ulysses S Grant

### The great migration

The later years of Grant's life saw a huge migration of Americans from rural areas to the big cities, causing unprecedented growth in urban areas. This mass migration caused almost 40% of US townships to lose population, which prompted an increase in air pollution, slums and sanitation issues.

### Women take a stand

Women's movements seeking equal opportunities and the vote gained strength after 1848. By the second half of the century women's high schools and colleges were founded and gradually career opportunities in secretarial work, nursing and more opened to women.

### Americans take to the sea

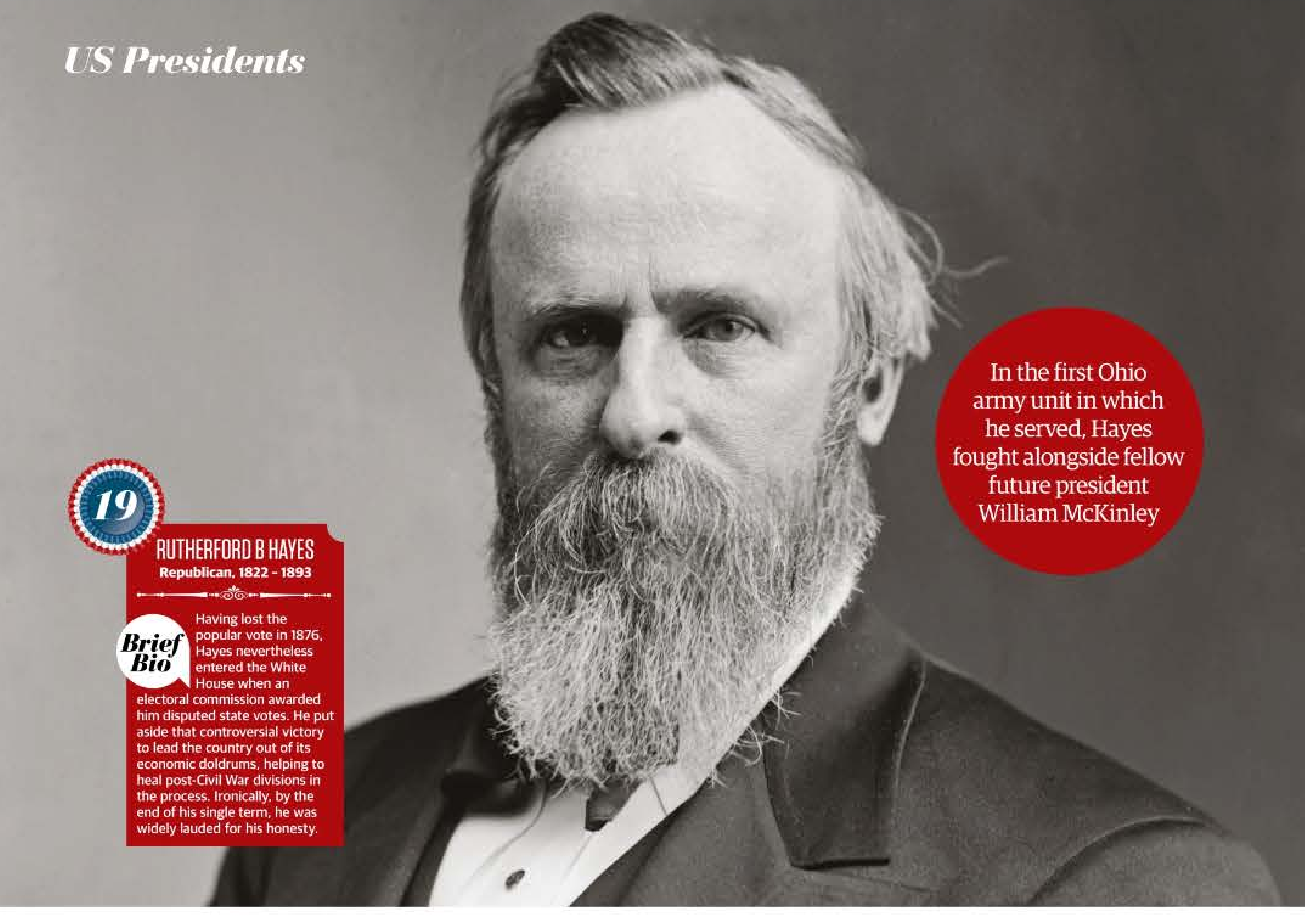
The mid-1870s marked an increase in travel. Easier transatlantic transportation and communication exposed more Americans to European life, and more Americans made trips to visit, work and even live abroad. Wealthy Americans paid a huge amount of money to travel on luxurious steamships, however these ships still relied on immigrant trade as their main source of income.

### The rise of gang wars

The increase of immigration into the USA caused violent criminal gangs to form in major cities such as the Five Points Gang in New York. Although these gangs were most prevalent prior to the Civil War, they experienced a resurgence in the northwest, midwest and American west afterwards.

### Read all about it!

American journalism and newspapers developed and grew through Grant's life. Politically independent newspapers such as the *New York Herald* were founded, and the *New York Tribune* became one of the first to publish multiple editions daily. Even smaller towns and cities were swept up by the newspaper craze, and some of the first war correspondents and investigative journalists stepped out into the world.



19

RUTHERFORD B HAYES
Republican, 1822 - 1893

Brief Bio

Having lost the popular vote in 1876, Hayes nevertheless entered the White House when an electoral commission awarded him disputed state votes. He put aside that controversial victory to lead the country out of its economic doldrums, helping to heal post-Civil War divisions in the process. Ironically, by the end of his single term, he was widely lauded for his honesty.

In the first Ohio army unit in which he served, Hayes fought alongside fellow future president William McKinley

*1877 – 1881*

# Rutherford B Hayes

## Accused of stealing the election that took him to office, Hayes was a rare one-term president through choice

"Rutherfraud" and "his Fraudulency" were some of the brickbats aimed at Rutherford Birchard Hayes after the 1876 election result was finally confirmed in March 1877. It took a special electoral commission sanctioned by Congress to decide who had won the disputed support of three states. In what remains the closest electoral college decision in American history, Hayes was credited with all the votes to defeat Samuel J Tilden by 185 to 184. Having won the popular vote by some quarter of a million as well, it was small wonder that Tilden's followers cried 'foul'. Nevertheless, keeping a promise made on accepting his party's presidential nomination to serve only a single term, by the end of it Hayes was admired for his fairness and honesty, and had restored the reputation of the office of presidency.

The 19th president was born in Delaware, Ohio. His father had died before he was born, leaving Hayes to be brought up by his widowed mother

Sophia Birchard Hayes and her brother, Sardis, who later became a notable businessman. The young Hayes schooled well, going on to study law at Harvard before setting up a successful legal practice in Cincinnati. He opposed slavery and found defending escaped slaves accused under the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 to be fulfilling work.

By the late 1850s, Hayes had married Lucy Webb and was Cincinnati's city solicitor, but was aware of the threat to the nation. He initially favoured letting the seceded states go their own way, only to alter his view after Confederate forces attacked Union soldiers at Fort Sumter. Within months, at almost 40 and with a young family, he had volunteered for the Union army.

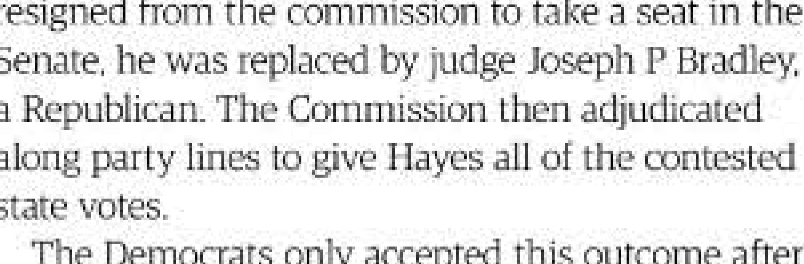
Hayes served bravely - he was wounded several times - and with distinction. At war's end he had the rank of brevet major general. He had also, despite refusing to leave his unit to campaign, been voted to the House of Representatives for Cincinnati's Republicans. He served from 1865-67, then was governor of Ohio for two terms. He briefly retired from office in 1872 but won a third election for governor three years later.

**Five US presidents fought in the Civil War, but Hayes was the only one to have been wounded**

As a politician with a solid career of service, a reputation for integrity and an impressive war record, Hayes was considered by Ohio Republicans as presidential material. He was far from favourite to receive the nomination at the 1876 Republican National Convention but when others failed to command a majority, Hayes secured the prize on the seventh ballot.

No one knew that this would lead to the most bitterly contested presidential election result in history. Hayes himself did not think he could win given that New York Democrat Tilden was a skilled political opponent, the country's economy was in depression and President Grant's sitting Republican administration was badly tarnished. Nevertheless the disputed results in Florida, Louisiana and South Carolina were close enough for both parties to claim the state votes. If Hayes secured them all, the White House was his.

The electoral commission formed to decide the outcome originally consisted of seven Republicans, seven Democrats and an independent Supreme Court judge, David Davis. However, when Davis



resigned from the commission to take a seat in the Senate, he was replaced by judge Joseph P Bradley, a Republican. The Commission then adjudicated along party lines to give Hayes all of the contested state votes.

The Democrats only accepted this outcome after informal, unwritten arrangements were agreed, known as the Compromise of 1877. The main elements of this were the removal of US troops from former Confederate states, allowing them to return to self-rule, and the appointment of at least one southern Democrat to Hayes' cabinet. Sure enough, within two months of Hayes taking office, all US troops were back in their barracks, and Tennessee Democrat David M Key was made postmaster general.

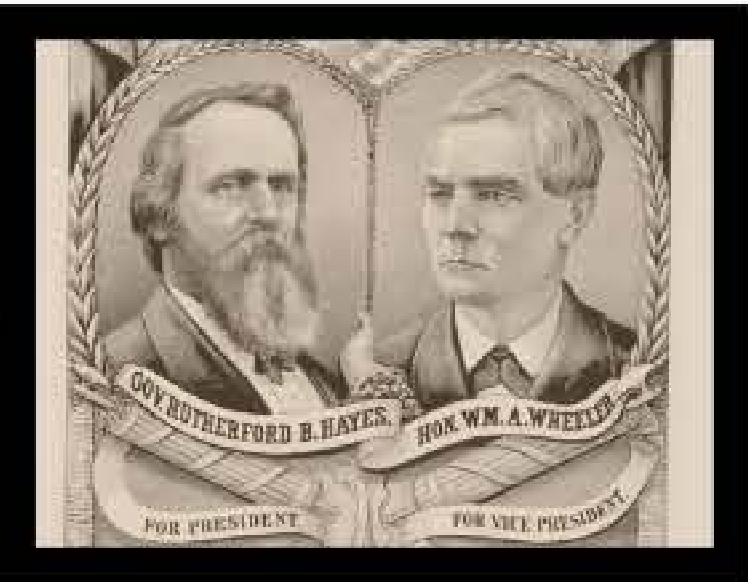
The withdrawal of troops effectively ended the post-Civil War period of reconstruction. This was a period when the former Confederate states were to be brought back under federal government control, with the establishment of civil and voting rights for freedmen. Hayes sought assurances that these would be maintained once troops left, but such promises were quickly forgotten. White Southerners sought to regain power and discriminatory control through violence and intimidation, forcing freedmen into second-class citizenship with limited rights that endured until the mid-1960s.

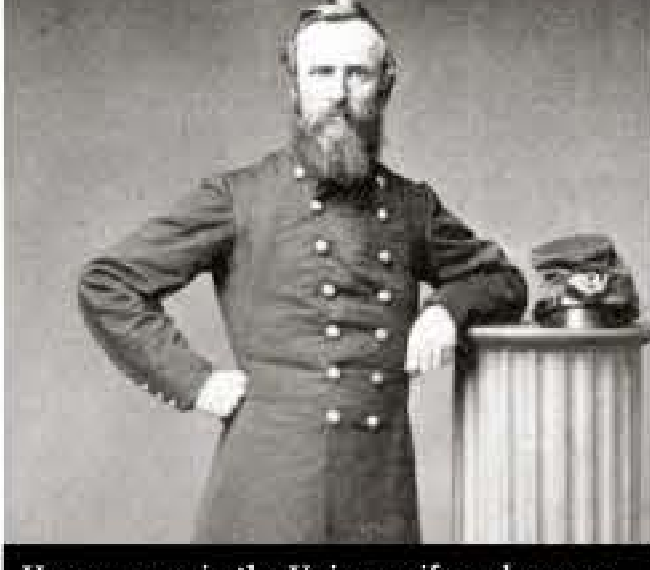
Hayes fared better in beginning reforms to the civil service, while his insistence that prosperity would resurface once the dollar properly returned to the gold standard - which had been suspended during the Civil War when the government printed 'greenback' dollars that were not redeemable in gold - proved correct. Indeed, the latter two years of his administration saw a marked economic recovery, thanks in no small part to his steadfast, anti-inflationary policies. He remained active after retirement, promoting the causes of equal educational opportunities for all, and for prison reform.

A gradualist rather than a dynamic reformer, Hayes was no flamboyant leader. Yet after the turmoil of his predecessors, from Lincoln's assassination, Johnson's impeachment, and the scandals of Grant's administration, his low-key honesty helped heal divisions left over from the War and restored dignity to the White House.

## One term only

An advocate of presidents serving a single, six-year period in office, Hayes was one of only three first-time elected presidents who resolved not to seek a second term. His rationale was to govern unhindered by party loyalties. Beholden to no one, he believed "he serves his party best who serves the country best." Some of his policies, such as the reforms he instigated to the civil service, which paved the way for positions to be filled on merit rather than as rewards or favours, angered significant senior Republicans, yet alienating them could not harm someone who was not seeking re-election.



Hayes poses in the Union uniform he wore during the Civil War

# Life in the time of Rutherford Birchard Hayes

## Age of communication

The Bell Telephone Company was created in 1877. Use of the device for which shareholder Alexander Graham Bell had done so much pioneering work to create grew rapidly. It was Bell himself who fitted a telephone in the White House, and Hayes was the first president to use it.

## The immigration issue

Resentment was growing against immigrants, particularly Chinese ones, who had arrived in the United States in significant numbers. Congressional legislation banning further Chinese immigrants was vetoed by Hayes as it contravened an existing treaty. He pushed through his own policy, which regulated rather than prohibited future immigration.

## Women's work

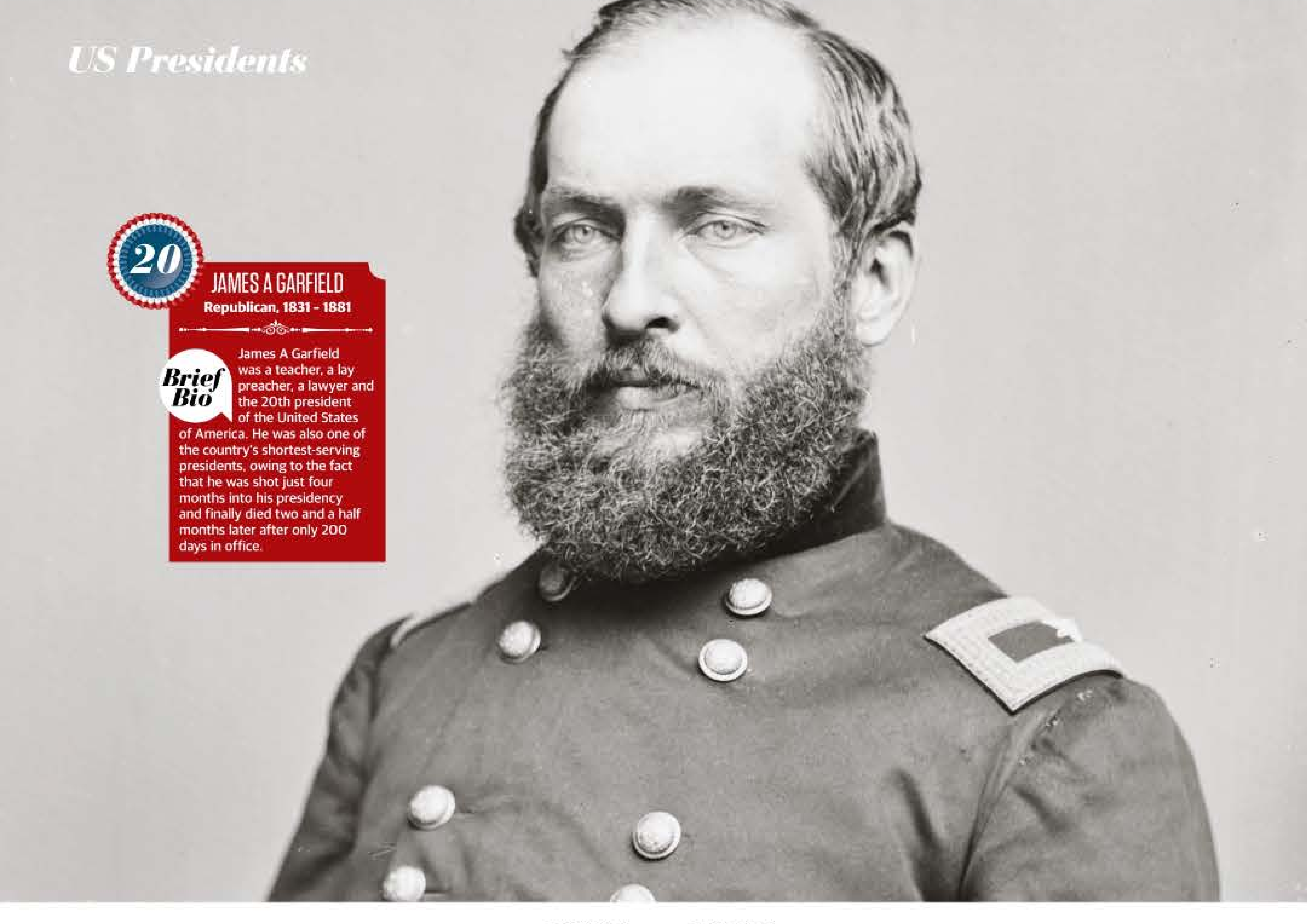
Social change inevitably followed the Civil War. Women reformers sought equal rights in many areas. Belva Lockwood, one of the country's first female lawyers, successfully lobbied Congress to allow women to practise before the Supreme Court. After Hayes signed the legislation, she became the first female attorney to do so.

## The 'Wild West'

Hayes was the first sitting president to visit the West Coast. The journey, mostly by rail but partly by wagon train, involved crossing territory inhabited by outlaws and hostile Native Americans. Hayes paternalistically proposed assimilating Indians into American society though he probably never understood the cultural problems that would create.

## Ultimate trade route

Business had long sought an Atlantic-Pacific canal. Hayes wanted the route under American control, but in 1880, French Suez Canal developer Ferdinand De Lesseps began surveying for his Panama Canal. Financial problems and disease among workers curtailed his efforts. The United States bought out the project, completing the canal in 1914.



20

**JAMES A GARFIELD**
**Republican, 1831 - 1881**

**Brief Bio** James A Garfield was a teacher, a lay preacher, a lawyer and the 20th president of the United States of America. He was also one of the country's shortest-serving presidents, owing to the fact that he was shot just four months into his presidency and finally died two and a half months later after only 200 days in office.

*1881 – 1881*

# James A Garfield

## Garfield's presidency was short-lived, but he still managed to make an impact on the United States of America

Like many men that came before him and many that came after, James A Garfield became president of the United States by accident. He had almost two decades of political experience and knew the workings of Congress inside out, but he never imaged that he would actually find himself in office. It could even be argued that he never wanted the job. Garfield often described his presidency as a 'bleak mountain', and famously said to his secretary, "These people would take my very brain, flesh and blood if they could."Also like a fair few presidents before him, Garfield came from humble beginnings. He was born in a log cabin in Moreland Hills, Ohio, on 19 November, 1831. He was one of five children, and named 'James' after his older brother who died in infancy. When Garfield was eventually elected, he became the last of the 'Log Cabin Presidents'.

Garfield lost his father when he was just two years old, an event which later caused him to look towards religion for guidance. He believed a greater power was leading him onwards. He started

preaching every Sunday until his dedication led to him to be ordained as a minister in the Church of the Disciples of Christ. Though Garfield is one of the United States' lesser-known leaders, he's often referred to as the 'Preacher President'.

As well as being a man of the cloth, Garfield was something of a genius. He enrolled at the Western Reserve Eclectic Institute (now named Hiram College) in Ohio and was taken on as a janitor/carpenter in his first year there. By his second, however, the college made him assistant professor of Literature and Ancient Languages. Upon graduating, he put himself through Williams College in Massachusetts, starting as a third-year student.

He returned to Ohio after graduating and began a teaching career at Hiram. As if by premonition, Garfield became the university's president by the time he was 26. Between his studies, he also managed to make time for romance, and married his sweetheart (and future first lady) Lucretia Rudolph on 11 November 1958.

As happy as he was, Garfield couldn't see himself reaching his full potential as a teacher. His time at Williams had made him politically aware, especially in the college's intensely anti-slavery atmosphere, and for the first time he found himself considering a career in politics. He put his name down to read law at a firm in Cleveland and was admitted to the bar in 1861.

Garfield's life changed with the lives of many more Americans in April, 1861, when a civil war broke out between the United States and the Confederate States. Though Garfield had no previous military training, he quickly joined the Union army as a lieutenant colonel, and rose to major general by the time the war ceased in 1965.

While the Civil War was still in progress, local Republican Party leaders invited Garfield to stand as a nominee for the local state senate after the presumptive nominee Cyrus Prentiss died. He was elected to Congress, serving in the House of Representatives from Ohio's nineteenth district, and managed to hold the seat for 17 years and nine consecutive terms.

Then everything changed for Garfield once more while attending the Republican convention of 1880 in Chicago. Ulysses S Grant, the 18th president of the United States, was seeking an unprecedented third term in office, and had secured the backing of powerful New York senator Roscoe Conkling. However, Grant was opposed by James Blaine of Maine and John Sherman of Ohio, the latter of which asked Garfield to deliver his nominating speech. Much to everyone's surprise, Garfield was so impressive that he was the one who ended up drawing the attention of the crowd. On the thirty-fourth ballot of the convention, the Wisconsin delegation announced it was shifting 16 votes to Garfield to the stunned crowd. Chester A Arthur of New York became Garfield's running mate as a partial concession to Conkling, and the pair won by a slim margin in November 1880. Against all the odds Garfield became the 20th president of the United States.

James A Garfield was the last of the seven presidents that were born in log cabins

Garfield's time in the White House was brief and tragic. Less than four months into office, he was gunned down in a Washington railroad station, and reportedly fell to the floor and gasped, "My god, what is this?" The shooter was Charles J Guiteau, a fanatic who believed he would be pleasing Conkling by elevating Arthur into office. At first, his assassination attempt appeared to be unsuccessful; the bullet was lodged in Garfield's body, but he was alive and under the watchful eyes of many doctors. His injury was painful and debilitating but he held on, releasing a statement which read: "Don't be disturbed about conflicting reports about my condition. It is true that I am still weak and on my back but I'm gaining every day and need only time and patience to bring me through."

In September 1881, two months after the shooting, Garfield made his final wish: to be moved to his cottage on the New Jersey Shore so he could watch the waves roll in as he lay. Half a mile of track was laid down by 300 men so that a special train could transport him to the front door of the cottage. Finally, on 19 September, 1881, James A Garfield passed away with his wife by his side. Towns and cities were soon draped in funeral emblems to mourn their new president.

## Civil rights: a work in progress

Since college, Garfield was extremely committed to the cause of civil rights. When he first became involved in politics, he recommended a universal education system funded by the federal government which he believed could be the key to empowering African Americans and improving the state of their civil rights. When Garfield eventually became president, freedmen had gained citizenship and suffrage that allowed them to participant in government, but Garfield was concerned that the southern white resistance would oppress them into becoming the country's permanent 'peasantry'. As a result, he appointed several African Americans to prominent positions, including John M Langston, Robert Elliot and Blanche K Bruce.



Garfield became the second US president to be assassinated, following the death of Abraham Lincoln 16 years earlier

## Life in the time of James A Garfield

### The world's first phone call

The world's first phone call occurred on 10 March 1876 while Garfield was a member of the US House of Representatives in Ohio's 19th district. The inventor of the telephone, Alexander Graham Bell, phoned his assistant Thomas Watson and said: "Mr Watson, come here. I want to see you."

### The Ku Klux Klan begins

The Ku Klux Klan was founded as a secret vigilante group on the Christmas Eve of 1865 in Pulaski, Tennessee, by six former members of the Confederate army. Word of the Klan and its white supremacist agenda spread until racial hate crimes were occurring all across the American South.

### Not just a man's job

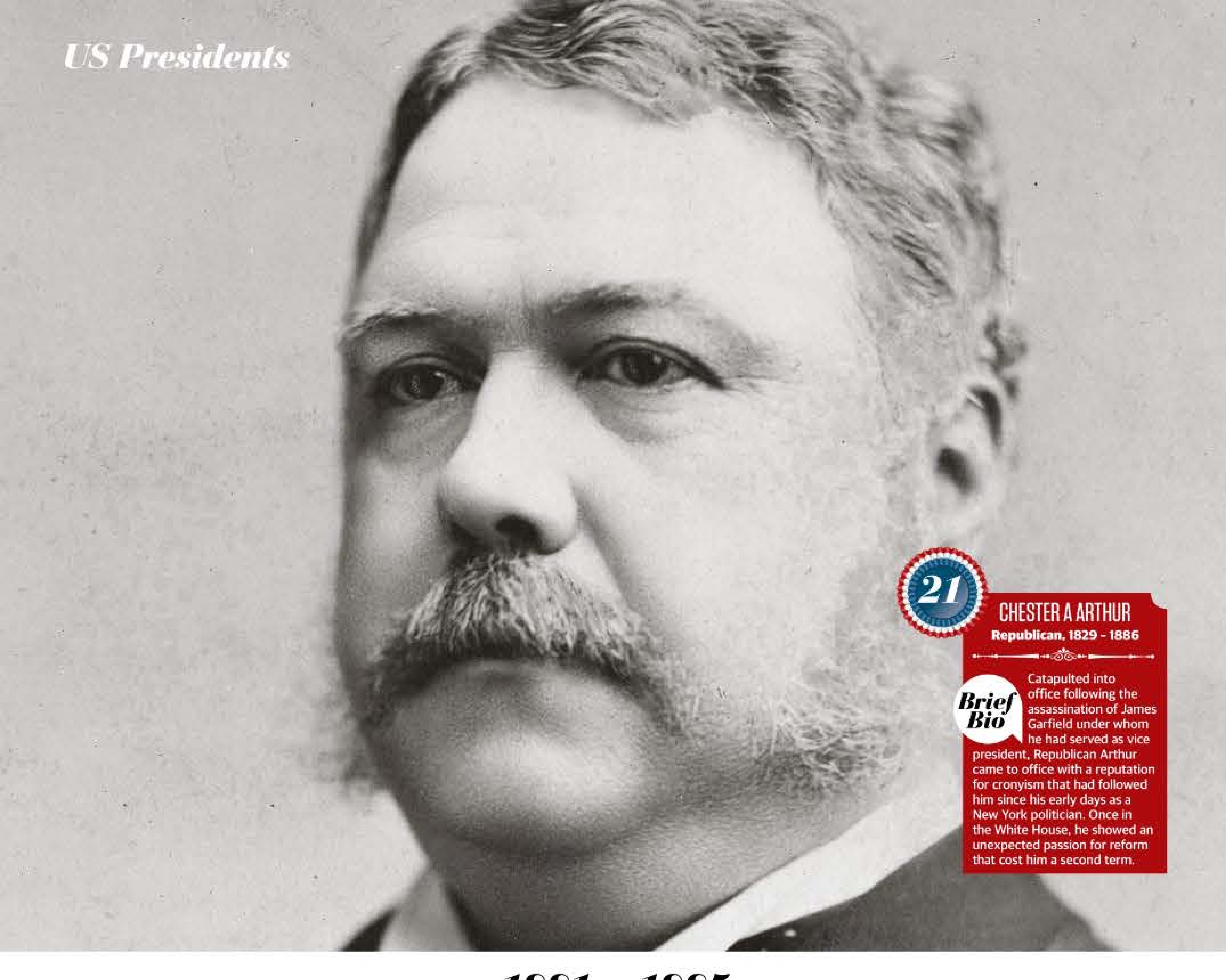
The United States got its first ever female doctor on 23 January 1849. Dr Elizabeth Blackwell was granted her degree by the Medical Institute of Geneva, New York. She was also the first woman on the UK Medical Register. Her younger sister Emily became the US's third ever female doctor.

### US state of mind

During Garfield's lifetime, 14 US states became officially recognised after admission to the Union, including Arkansas, Michigan, Florida, Texas, Iowa, Wisconsin, California, Minnesota, Oregon, Kansas, West Virginia, Nevada, Nebraska and Colorado. Only 12 remained to make up the 50 current US states.

### A helping hand

The American Red Cross was established in 1881 by pioneering nurse Clara Barton, who had heard word of the Red Cross in Geneva, Switzerland. It is still running today.




## *1881 – 1885*

# Chester A Arthur

In a tumultuous administration, Chester A Arthur found himself grappling with immigration, the rights of Native Americans and reform

With the shooting of James A Garfield, fate dealt Chester Alan Arthur a card he could never have anticipated. The man who had been vice president for just six months was, quite unexpectedly, about to become the most powerful man in the United States, a role he had never sought.

The son of a Baptist preacher who had emigrated from what is now Northern Ireland, Arthur was born in Vermont, but grew up in New York state. Success came quickly to the and ambitious young man, who settled on a legal career after sampling teaching. He won renown for his role in civil rights cases, famously mounting a successful challenge to the segregation of New York City streetcar lines. Personal happiness followed professional success and in 1859 Arthur married Ellen Herndon, with whom he would have three children.

When the Civil War swept through the US, Arthur impressed everyone with his administrative skills after being appointed by governor Edwin D Morgan to the militia as a quartermaster, proving the ideal choice to ensure that the northern armies were properly equipped and billeted. He rose




quickly though the ranks and was instrumental in enlisting thousands of men whilst being offered, and refusing, the command of multiple regiments.

After the war, Arthur returned to civilian life but his role in the militia had given him a taste for politics and his obvious acumen had made an impact on people in political high places. Roscoe Conkling, a Republican Senator notorious for cronyism, took Arthur under his wing and initiated him into the New York political machine, a system of patronage that depended on the well-greased wheels of corruption. It was a world in which party loyalty was rewarded with power, influence and a generous salary and when Arthur was given the senior role of collector, he soon became a familiar figure on both the New York political circuit and its social counterpart.

> Arthur's dedication to the whirlwind society scene of the Republican machine was not shared by his wife, leading to domestic disharmony

In Washington, however, the patronage system was under fire for corruption and though the powerful Conklin pulled all the strings available to him, Arthur was removed from the role of collector in 1878, after seven years in the job. Arthur threw his weight into campaigning instead, lending his well-respected name and finely-honed skills to the Stalwarts, his own particular faction of the Republicans. When Ellen died in 1880, her grief-stricken widower threw himself into his career and when the chance came to stand as vice president on the ticket of Garfield in 1881, Arthur took it.

The Republicans were not expected to win the election and yet, with a majority of just over 7000 votes, they did. Garfield, however, never warmed to his Stalwart running mate and Arthur found himself sidelined, his attempts to bring his friends into office frustrated. All that was to change with Garfield's death on 19 September 1881 and in the early hours of the following day, in his own home, Chester A Arthur was sworn in as the 21st President of the United States.

One of his first moves was to veto an attempt to funnel a surplus of $145million into government coffers, instead proposing that it should be used to support tax relief. This won him huge support among the people, though did little for his popularity in the Senate. That same year he entered more contentious waters when he signed off on the Immigration Act, excluding criminals, the poor and the mentally disabled from coming into the United States. However, when a bill proposing a 20 year freeze on all immigration from China was passed, Arthur personally vetoed the ban and only reluctantly agreed to set a term of 10 years instead.

Arthur's administration was heavy with his old New York friends and fellow Stalwarts so his next move could not have come as more of a surprise. In 1883, Democrat Senator George H Pendleton introduced a previously rejected bill that would end the system of patronage. No more would civil service jobs be awarded based on party affiliation, but instead candidates would be appointed on merit alone. The party man who owed his career to the Republican machine now turned his back on it.

Arthur's attempts to intervene in civil rights and oppose segregation and discrimination on racial grounds were less successful. He nevertheless presided over increased funding for Native American education and rights.

Time was not on Arthur's side though and within months of being sworn in, he was diagnosed with Bright's disease, a condition he attempted to keep secret. The once vibrant man of fashion grew frail as whispers of his illness sounded throughout Washington. When the time came to seek nomination for re-election, Arthur campaigned without much hope of success, thanks to his refusal to support any particular faction. He did not win the nomination, dying the following year.

## The Civil War

Arthur made his name during the American Civil War, when soldiers fought to secure the Union and abolish slavery or win independence for the Confederate states and maintain the status quo. This war between north and south was brutal and bloody, costing the lives of more than 600,000 soldiers and unknown number of civilians, estimated to be in the tens of thousands. When the North claimed victory, the industry and communities of the South lay in tatters, resulting in an economic imbalance that lasted for decades as the opposing sides began the slow process of reconciliation and rebuilding.



Inventor Thomas Edison was one of the most influential public figures during Arthur's presidency

## Life in the time of Chester A Arthur

### Trail of tears

In 1830, Congress passed the Indian Removal Act with the approval of President Andrew Jackson. The Act was intended to remove native Americans from territories that were valuable to settlers. Thousands died during the removals, which became famous as the Trail of Tears.

### The rush for gold

Beginning in 1848, the California Gold Rush saw hundreds of thousands of treasure hunters, known as Forty-Niners, flock to California in search of gold. Settlers faced terrible odds to survive and prosper, but the rewards for success could be enormous.

### A victory for abolition

Slavery was officially abolished by the 13th Amendment in 1865 under President Abraham Lincoln. The amendment states unequivocally that "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction."

### Edison lights the US

In 1879, Thomas Edison patented the first electric light bulb and promised to "make electricity so cheap that only the rich will burn candles". In the years that followed, light bulbs became a regular fixture in public buildings across the world.

### The west gets wilder

As Edison brought electric light to the United States, in Tombstone, the wild west still held sway. On 26 October 1881, the infamous shootout that has become known as the Gunfight at the OK Corral saw the name of Wyatt Earp pass into legend.



22/24

**GROVER CLEVELAND**
**Democrat, 1837 - 1908**

**Brief Bio**

Grover Cleveland rose from humble beginnings and forged a reputation as a watchdog president, vetoing record numbers of bills in office. Known for his steadfast honesty and a hatred for corruption and special interests, Cleveland expanded the powers of the executive branch and set the stage for the modern presidency of the 20th century.

Cleveland served as sheriff in Erie County, Ohio for two years, personally undertaking the execution of condemned criminals

*1885 – 1889 & 1893 – 1897*

# Grover Cleveland

## America's only double-dip president, Grover Cleveland served two nonconsecutive terms in office, winning the popular vote three times

Grover Cleveland was an atypical president in many ways. He won the popular vote three times (he was denied by the electoral college once) and served two nonconsecutive terms. He came into office a bachelor, and married his close friend's daughter, Frances Folsom – 27 years his junior – in the White House. This was a strange arrangement, as Folsom had been Cleveland's ward after her father's death, and he had known her since she was a child.

Grover Cleveland – born Stephen Grover Cleveland – had eight brothers and sisters, and was born into penury. He first became a teacher at the New York Institute for the Blind, living in modest quarters, even when he later earned a comfortable living as a lawyer. He rose to prominence as the Mayor of Buffalo, New York, when he fought bitterly with entrenched municipal corruption, and later as the Governor of New York, where he forged a reputation for himself as a constitutionalist and a trigger-happy vetoer. Cleveland's growing reputation as a man untarnished by any special interests won him the democratic nomination in the 1884 presidential election. The campaign was characterised by bitter, personal insults: the republicans unearthed the fact that Cleveland had fathered an illegitimate child during his time as a lawyer. They mocked him with the chant "Ma, Ma, where's my Pa?" but his honesty in dealing with the affair won him plaudits, and he won the election.

As president, Cleveland broke with tradition by repudiating the spoils system and instead appointing bureaucrats on a merit basis, regardless of their political affiliation. He set records for presidential



A political poster promoting Cleveland's unsuccessful campaign for re-election in 1888

vetoes and did not propose legislation, believing in the presidency as a watchdog rather than an advocate. He was passionate about lowering tariffs, which would prove to be his undoing after his first term. On foreign policy he was almost completely silent. He lost the election of 1888 to Benjamin Harrison.

Even though Cleveland was confident that he would be re-elected after a hiatus of four years – his wife famously asked a staff member to keep the White House furniture untouched, in expectation of their return – he spent the time away from politics on an extended vacation, fishing in New York. He returned to prominence shortly before the 1892 election with a letter criticising his successor's plan to increase the dollar's dependence on the silver standard. Cleveland's lingering reputation from his first term and opposition to tariffs saw him win the 1892 election handily. That election was muted in part due to the death of the wife of the democratic candidate, Benjamin Harrison, from tuberculosis. Neither Cleveland nor his opponent campaigned in the final weeks of the race.

His second term was immediately blighted by a series of crises. In 1893, the stock market fell sharply, plunging the country into depression and marking the end of the dollar's dependence on silver. During the stock market panic, Cleveland noticed a growth on the roof of his mouth, which proved to be a cancerous tumour. Reluctant to disclose his health emergency to the American public and unsettle them further, he arranged to be operated on during a journey on a friend's yacht. The surgery and the cover-up were successful, although Cleveland was left disfigured.

In 1894, over 100,000 railroad workers went on strike, citing low wages and long workdays. This crippled the country's mail, and Cleveland quickly dispatched federal troops to disperse the strike and arrest the instigators. His Democratic party suffered greatly for Cleveland's heavy-handed tactics in dealing with the strikes. Cleveland's steadfast opposition to unions and general strikes hardened the attitude of organised labour toward the government and empowered large corporations at the expense of the American worker. His successors, William Taft and Teddy Roosevelt, would work to defuse the power of the corporation that Cleveland established, and end the robber baron era.

His foreign policy was inconsistent. He was a committed isolationist, believing that the US should generally withdraw from global political affairs. In that vein, Cleveland opposed the annexation of Hawaii and instead set up diplomatic relations with the Republic of Hawaii, despite the desire of many in congress to forcefully join the territory with the Union. However, Cleveland did intervene in a Venezuelan border dispute with the United Kingdom. In an updated reading of the Monroe Doctrine, Cleveland decided that the US had an interest in any major dispute in the Western Hemisphere. So when the UK contested a border between British Guyana and Venezuela, Cleveland rashly threatened war with Britain, although the matter was resolved cordially. President Cleveland is remembered chiefly for his steady hand in domestic affairs, because his overseas involvements were very limited.

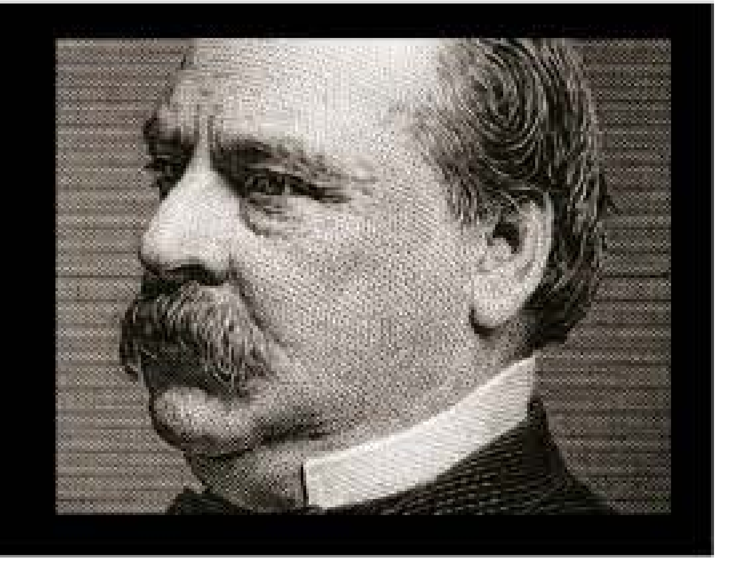
Cleveland loved beer and was steadfastly opposed to prohibition and the temperance movement

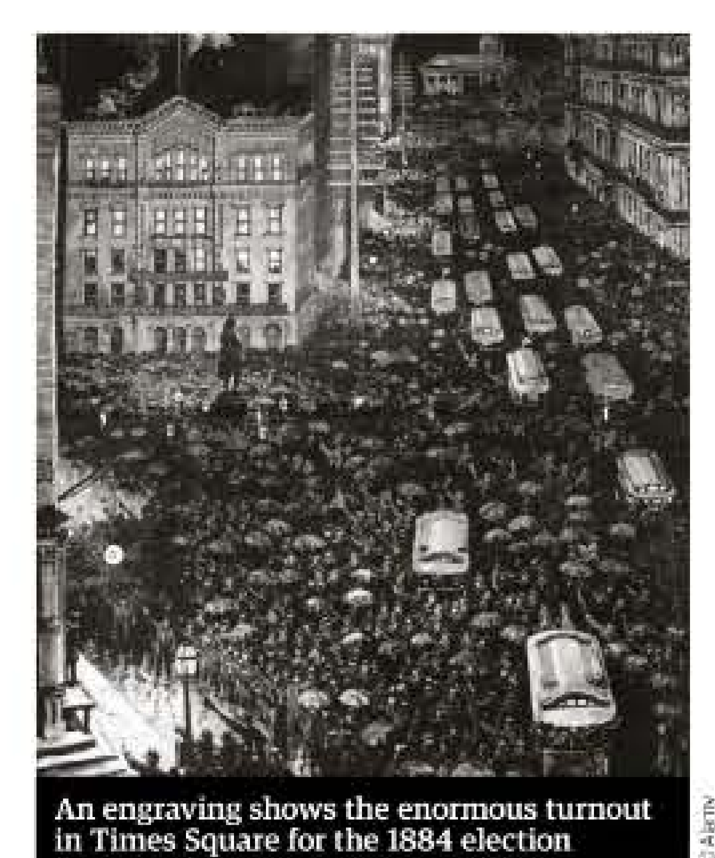
Cleveland retired quietly to private life, and did not comment on politics often. His last foray into public affairs came in 1906 when he penned an editorial for *The Ladies Home Journal*, insisting that "sensible and responsible women do not want to vote. The relative positions to be assumed by men and women in the working out of our civilization were assigned long ago by a higher intelligence."

Cleveland is remembered for his anti-corruption efforts and his belief in the president as a guardian rather than an activist. Despite strengthening the executive branch and laying the groundwork for Teddy Roosevelt's administration, Cleveland never presented a clear vision for the future.

## The cross of gold

The defining political debate of Grover Cleveland's era was the question of whether the currency should be backed only by gold, or by a combination of gold and silver (the dollar would eventually become fiat money, untethered to any standard). Taxpayers generally paid their government bills with silver, while overseas creditors demanded to be paid in gold, which was causing a decline in the nation's stocks of gold. Worries about deflation also prompted demands for more silver currency. Cleveland stood firm on the gold standard, stalling the debate for the length of his presidency.




An engraving shows the enormous turnout in Times Square for the 1884 election



# Life in the time of Grover Cleveland

### A long road to suffrage

In the late 1800s, women's suffrage movements were in full swing, with women getting the vote in various states. Cleveland never spoke against giving women the vote during his presidency, careful not to alienate any supporters. However, after his term ended he made his thoughts clear on women's suffrage – a resounding 'no'.

### Wounded knee and spirit

As the last remaining caches of original Native American land were taken over, they faced pressure to forcibly relocate to unpalatable reservations or integrate into American society. Cleveland strongly advocated the latter, offering federal aid for education and land grants.

### Separate but equal

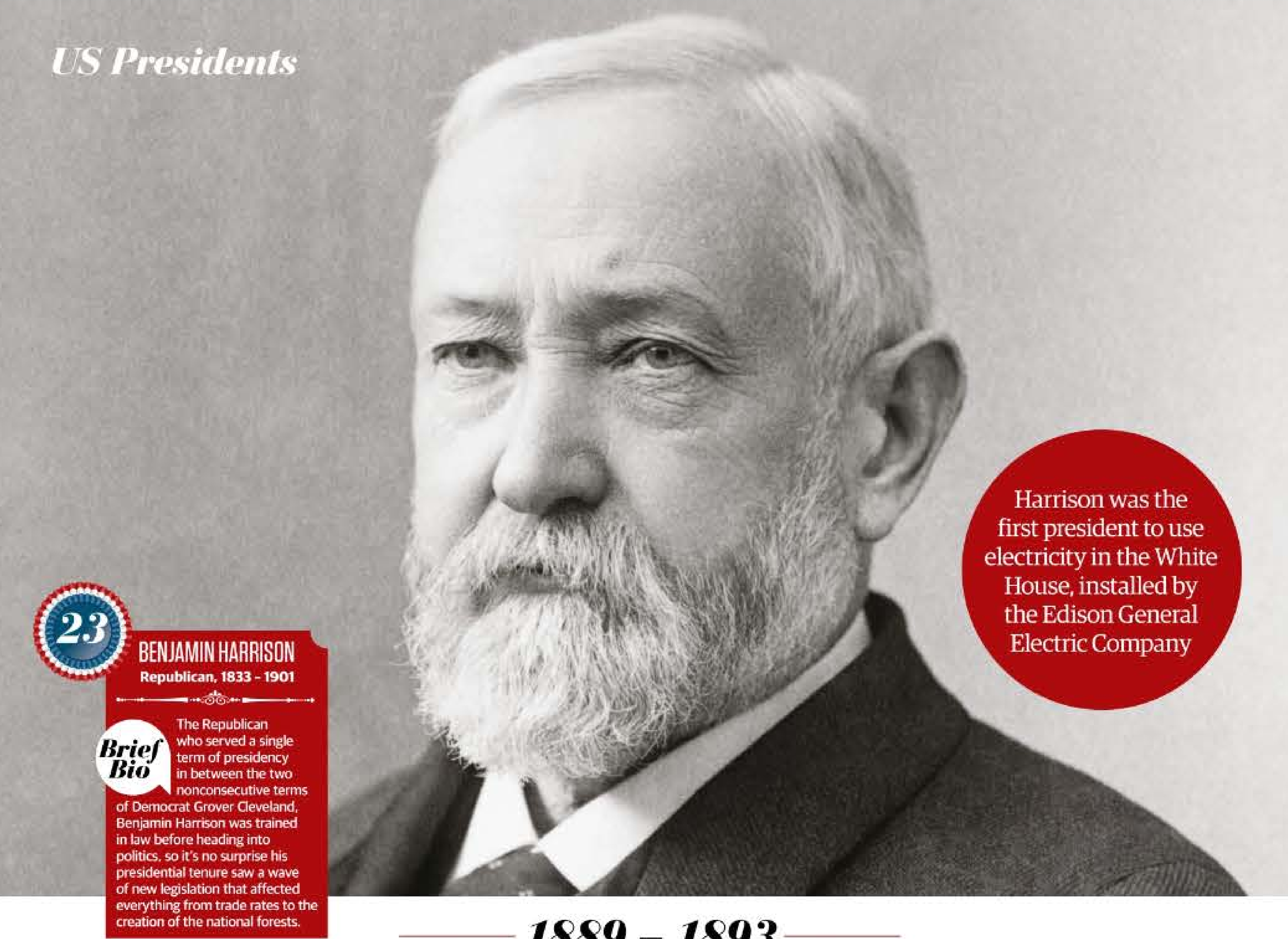
The landmark Plessy v Ferguson Supreme Court decision resoundingly affirmed the constitutionality of state laws enabling segregation in public facilities. The law and doctrine would persist until 1954. The steps towards legislative equality established during the post-Civil War reconstruction era were erased by the decision.

### How the other half lives

A sensational work of photojournalism published in 1890 exposed the desperate conditions in the New York slums. The book galvanised public opinion, exposing the tremendous inequality of the Gilded Age, and led to the closing of the worst tenements, sweatshops, and public schools in New York, and the installation of public services for the poor.

### Ellis Island opens its gates

The famous New York island became a pit stop for millions of European immigrants seeking a better life in the United States. From 1892 to its closing in 1954, Ellis island would accept over 12 million immigrants.



Harrison was the first president to use electricity in the White House, installed by the Edison General Electric Company

23

BENJAMIN HARRISON

Republican, 1833 - 1901

Brief Bio

The Republican who served a single term of presidency in between the two nonconsecutive terms of Democrat Grover Cleveland, Benjamin Harrison was trained in law before heading into politics, so it's no surprise his presidential tenure saw a wave of new legislation that affected everything from trade rates to the creation of the national forests.

1889 – 1893

# Benjamin Harrison

## A former Union colonel in the Civil War, Harrison was big on legislation but his policies led to the Billion Dollar Congress

The grandson of the ninth president of the US William Henry Harrison, Benjamin Harrison was born on 20 August 1833. The second of eight children, the young Harrison grew up on a farm in North Bend, Ohio, and was seven years old when his grandfather was sworn into office (although the elder statesman only lasted 32 days in the White House before passing away from a bout of pneumonia). His father was a member of the House of Representatives, so a certain level of achievement was expected of Harrison from an early age.

Harrison's early education took place in a decrepit one-room schoolhouse before his parents found the money for a private tutor, and he was soon ready to attend Farmer's College near Cincinnati in 1847. He attended college for two years and while there he met his future wife, Caroline Scott. In 1850, he transferred to Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, before choosing a career in law as a legal apprentice.

Law had become his career, but his mind was also drawn to another arena: politics. In 1856, Harrison had joined the Republican Party with his father's blessing, attracted by its opposition


While cold in demeanor, Harrison was a hyperactive legislator and established the first base at Pearl Harbor

to slavery and its policies on expansion into the western territories.

However, his political aspirations were cut short when 11 Southern states seceded from the Union, plunging the nation into a state of brutal Civil War. He immediately signed up to fight, joining the Union Army as a lieutenant in the 70th Indiana Volunteer Infantry Regiment. He remained in service until the conflict's end in 1865, achieving the rank of brevet brigadier general by the time he returned to civilian life.

He resumed his practice of law and found his political ambitions had waned little in the interim - if anything they burned hotter than ever and he immediately began campaigning. Those attempts were unsuccessful to begin with (including an attempt to capture the Republican gubernatorial nomination 1872), but his hard work eventually paid off in 1880 when he was successfully elected to the United States Senate.

Harrison represented Indiana in the Senate for seven years and campaigned ferociously for the rights of homesteaders and Native American tribes who found the expansion of the railroads encroaching on their lands. He also spent time fighting to ensure good pensions for veterans of the Civil War, but eventually lost his seat in 1887.

However, that loss was soon flipped on its head when Harrison was nominated as the Republican candidate for the presidency the very next year. His backers believed his honest principles and devout faith would strike a chord with voters. His bid for election to the White House often relied upon delegations visiting Indianapolis, where he would give speeches and garner support (a process commonly known as 'front-porch campaigning').

That faith was well-placed. Harrison was sworn into office on 4 March 1889 as the 23rd president of the United States. The country's economy was in a state of depression, so serious legislation was required to revive it. The White House responded by raising a billion dollars in revenue.

Much of this was compounded by the McKinley Tariff, a new bill backed by the president that effectively increased tariffs to their highest ever levels. Harrison argued this was for the recovery of the nation, but Democrats accused the administration of needlessly filling its coffers, dubbing it the 'Billion Dollar Congress'.

While Harrison's tenure was no doubt an expensive one for the economy, it was also one that saw progressive legislation in other areas, specifically ones that tackled currency, monopolies and the expansion of equity. Harrison lent his support to the Sherman Antitrust Act, which was designed to stop companies and individuals building a monopoly on certain resources (such as coal) - and while not enforced to any great standard under his administration, the Federal act was the first of its kind and indicative of Harrison's growing proactivity when it came to executive powers.

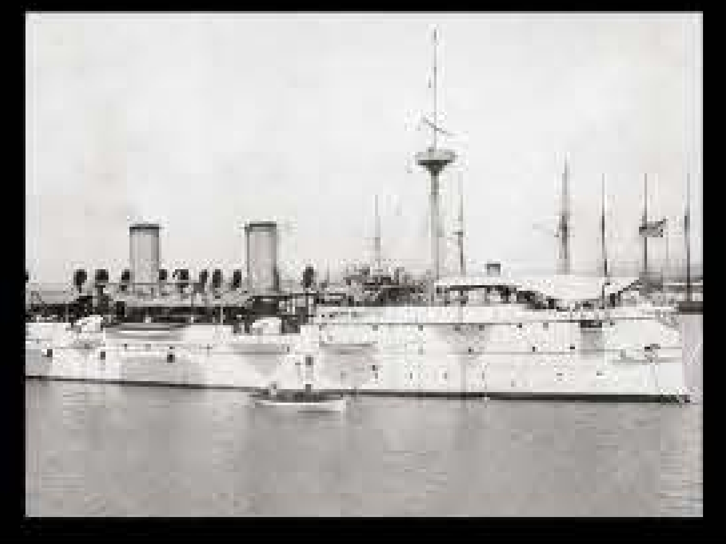
Action was also required on the state of currency, with a confusion as to whether the dollar should be backed by gold and silver, or gold alone. The distinction between the two brought the value of the American dollar into repute, mainly because silver was worth less than gold. To solve this issue in part, Harrison backed the Sherman Silver Purchase Act, which required the government to purchase 4.5 million ounces of silver per month to offset its damaging use.

Harrison also conducted a great deal of foreign policy, including the issue of Hawaii and its annexation (see the box below) as well as tackling the issue of Civil Rights and the treatment of Native American tribes. In both areas he ultimately failed - his campaign to revise the state of rights for African Americans was blocked at every turn, and his attempts to reintegrate Native American tribes into the growing white populace ultimately led to the massacre at Wounded Knee (where 150 men, women and children were butchered).

When Harrison was ousted from office in 1893 (ironically by the man *he* had defeated four years prior, Grover Cleveland), his popularity had faded. Harrison returned to the practice of law following his single term in office before taking up a teaching post at Stanford University. He passed away on 13 March, 1901 from a bout of pneumonia.

## Harrison's foreign policies

While his domestic policies were a mixed bag, Harrison's proactive attitude to overseas affairs changed the United States' status on the global stage. His administration was locked in a battle with Germany and the UK for control of the Samoan Islands before he oversaw the establishment of a three-power protectorate that solidified American interests in the Pacific. He pushed through the Meat Inspection Act, which improved exports of US pork, as well as attempting unsuccessfully to bring Hawaii into the Union. He also avoided an international incident with Chile when two American sailors were killed while on shore leave.



Portrait of a teenaged Benjamin Harrison, taken around 1850

## Life in the time of Benjamin Harrison

### Welcome back

As well as North and South Dakota, both Montana and Washington were welcomed back into the Union. This integration was actually started by Grover Cleveland during his first term of office. Known as the Enabling Act, this bill laid out the ground rules needed for these territories to resume the status of state in the Union.

### Blood sports

The last official bout of bare-knuckle boxing took place in 1889, when heavyweight champion John L Sullivan (aka the Boston Strong Boy) defeated Jake Kilrain in a world championship match that went a staggering 75 rounds. It wouldn't be until 2011 that another bout would be legally conducted.

### Protecting the veterans

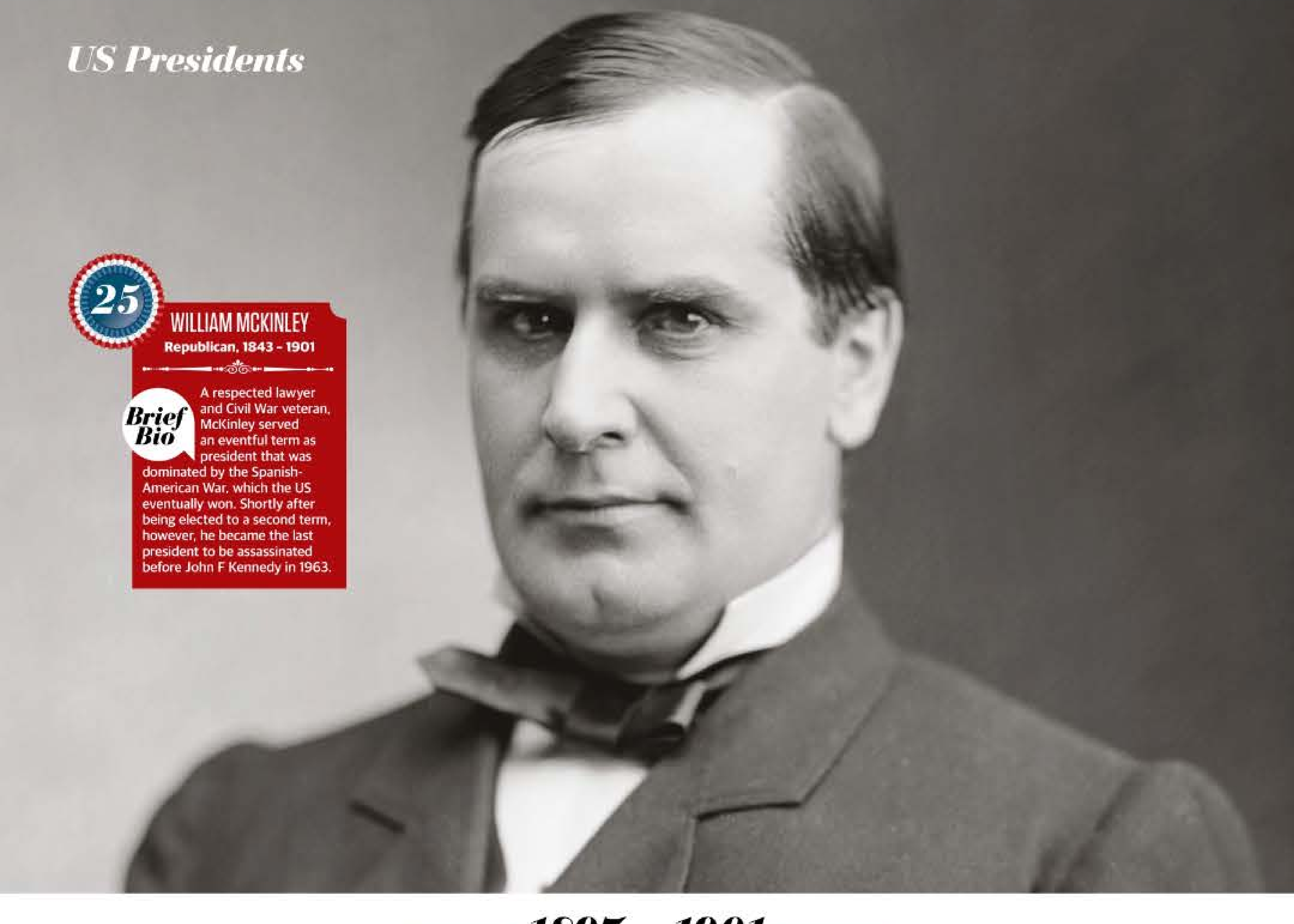
In 1890, Harrison saw through the Dependent and Disability Pension Act, which was designed to protect the livelihoods of veterans who had suffered life-changing injuries during the Civil War. And while it did help to distribute some of the Federal budget, payments for pensions skyrocketed and the administration's spending continued to accelerate.

### Green and pleasant land

In 1891, Harrison successfully lobbied the Land Revision Act through Congress and kickstarted the process of reclaiming surplus land that had been released into the public domain. Within a month of its enactment, Harrison began establishing the first national forest reserve in Yellowstone Park, Wyoming.

### Naval reinvention

When Harrison took office, only two naval warships were in service. Realising the United States could not exist in the modern era without a credible navy, he headed up a new construction phase that would eventually see the construction of ten new warships by 1898. Interestingly, seven of these naval ships were started during Harrison's presidency.




*1897 – 1901*

# William McKinley

Calm and moral, the last president to have served in the Civil War unwittingly ushered the United States onto the world stage as a new global superpower

The seventh child of deeply devout Methodist parents, McKinley's neat and gentlemanly demeanour, intelligence and excellence at sports and speaking, earned him friends from an early age. When the secession of the southern states from the Union of the United States ignited the Civil War in June 1861, the 18-year-old McKinley immediately enlisted on the Union side, tasked with supplying rations to front-line infantry soldiers as a commissary sergeant. Next September, after encountering Confederates at the Battle of South Mountain in Maryland, he proved his worth in one of the Civil War's bloodiest conflicts: the Battle of Antietam on 17 September 1862. Under heavy fire, McKinley drove mule teams over rough ground to supply his compatriots. Over 22,000 men were killed or wounded on that "lovely September day - an ideal Sunday morning" (McKinley's words). The following spring, after almost daily contact with enemy guerillas, McKinley's company engaged in a short, savage battle at Cloyd's Mountain, western Virginia. The hand-to-hand fighting lasted over the space of just one hour and was, for McKinley, "as desperate as any witnessed during the war." After the Battle of Berryville in August he was appointed captain under general George Crook (1830-1890). At the Battle of Cedar Creek, aided by heavy fog, surprise attacks by Confederates threatened to rout the Union forces, but gallant moves by their commanders, including McKinley, prevailed. For this and "gallant and meritorious services" in two further battles (Opequan and

## Free trade vs protectionism

McKinley's political ethos was defined by protectionism, guarding the nation's trade interests by imposing import tariffs. Contrasting with the free trade approach, the McKinley Tariff purported to benefit Americans by raising the average duty on foreign imports (notably tin cans and wool) to almost 50 per cent, whilst removing duty on some goods, ostensibly to reduce smuggling. "Under free trade the trader is the master and the producer the slave," McKinley argued. "Protection is the law of nature, the law of self-preservation, of self-development, of securing the highest and best destiny of the race of man." After 450 amendments, McKinley's Tariff Bill passed in 1890, resulting in an overall higher cost of living.



Fisher's Hill), major McKinley was made a brevet major of volunteers by President Lincoln.

After the war, the qualities of duty and patriotism that distinguished him as a soldier were channelled into law. As a plain speaker, eschewing emotional flourishes, his advocacy in important county cases at Canton, Ohio was said to have given his clients great confidence. A statesman-like appearance, along with a whimsical sense of humour, were certainly among the qualities noticed by the daughter of a prominent banker Ida Saxton, for on 25 January 1871 they married. Family tragedies soon overshadowed their lives with the deaths of their only children: Ida, who died at five months, and Katie three years later. McKinley's devotion to his shattered wife manifested in regular breaches of normal protocols for presidential wives through his life.

As a protectionist, McKinley successfully ran his own Republican campaign for Ohio's 17th congressional district in 1877. Despite Democrat gerrymandering (the manipulation of district boundaries), he held his seat until 1882, returning to Congress two years later. Thwarted in becoming speaker of the House in 1889, he became chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, responsible for framing a new tariff bill. After his term completed, he became Ohio governor and by 1896 had weathered an almost financially-ruinous spell, and was positioning to run for president as the Republican nominee. While his opponent William Jennings Bryan toured the country speaking to millions, McKinley declared "I might just as well set up a trapeze on my front lawn and compete with some professional athlete as go out speaking against Bryan." His front-porch campaign at home swayed the crucial Midwest states and he was sworn in on 4 March 1897.

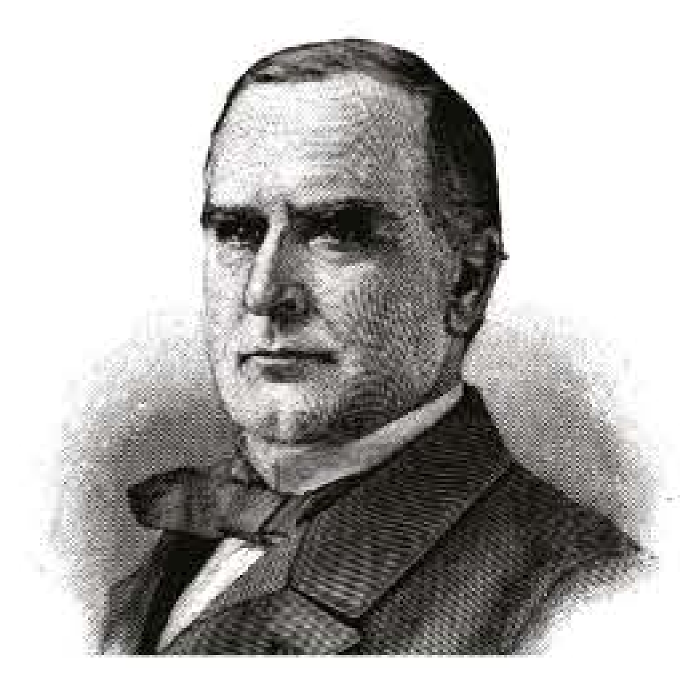
Following years of despotic colonial rule by the Spanish, the Cubans revolted in 1895. When Spain's prime minister was assassinated in August 1897, McKinley delivered conciliatory messages and pleas for Spanish concessions. Disputes only escalated, though, and with pro-Spanish demonstrators rioting in Havana in January 1898, McKinley sent the battleship Maine to protect US citizens.

> McKinley was the first president in almost 30 years to be clean shaven, since Andrew Johnson was in office

When the ship exploded in Havana harbour on February 15, killing 266 crew members, the United States Navy (wrongly) blamed a Spanish mine. As diplomacy grew exhausted, politicians on all sides stepped up the pressure on the president to overcome his strong reluctance to declare war. Diplomatic relations ended on 21 April, and McKinley announced a blockade of Cuban ports. On 25 April, following Spain's declaration of war, American politicians voted to respond in kind. A bill was drawn to raise funds for naval warships, and McKinley called for volunteers to enlist. Spain's Pacific fleet of ten ships in Manila (another theatre of conflict), and their Atlantic fleet off Jamaica and Cuba were destroyed, enabling US troops to capture both Manila and Puerto Rico. McKinley's face was pale and haggard under the strain of thousands of dispatches flowing into his war room next to the Oval Office. A month-long stand-off between the United States and Spanish fleets off the Cuban coast ended on 3 July with the destruction of the Spanish as they attempted to break out of Santiago Bay. Madrid sued for peace, relinquishing almost their entire empire by the time of the Treaty of Paris of 11 April 1899.

The treaty was controversial among 'anti-expansionist' politicians reluctant to preside over an empire, the president included. Yet in ceding Spanish territory to their control in return for payment, the United States became - inadvertently - a world power, for which history credits McKinley.

On 6 September 1901, McKinley was socialising at the Pan American Exposition in Buffalo, New York. Moments after handing a girl his lucky red carnation, he was shot twice with a revolver held by Leon Czolgosz, an unemployed factory worker. Since the bullets were lodged deep in his abdomen, doctors could do little, and McKinley expired eight days later on 14 September. His death was the third presidential assassination in 30 years. As men beat Czolgosz to the ground, the assassin could well have been lynched but for McKinley's intervention. "Go easy on him, boys", the wounded president urged with his characteristic aplomb, "we don't want to hurt him."



## Life in the time of William McKinley

### Commander and friend

McKinley's army commander, Major Rutherford B Hayes (1822-1893), who was badly wounded in the Battle of Antietam, was helped by McKinley in becoming Ohio governor. In 1876 McKinley helped him receive the party nomination that led to Hayes becoming the 19th president from 1877-1881.

### Costly campaigning

Republican senator Mark 'Dollar' Hanna prised $3.5 million out of prominent bankers to spend on McKinley's presidential campaign, making it by far the costliest that has ever been run when compared to today's rates. Even though McKinley stayed at home, he managed to outspend his opponent by a factor of five to one, chiefly by printing millions of leaflets.

### The real Wizard of Oz?

Several 20th-century scholars have suggested that L Frank Baum's 1900 children's novel may be an allegory of the US when McKinley and Bryan ran for president in 1896. If so, McKinley was portrayed by the titular Wizard; Bryan, the Cowardly Lion. The Yellow Brick Road and Dorothy's silver shoes represented the battle over currency reform: the gold standard that Republicans preferred, and the Democrats' want of a system also including silver.

### The first filmed president

In 1901, McKinley was the first US president to be filmed when and his wife Ida reenacted his receiving of the Republican nomination for president. He was also filmed during his inauguration on the way to and when taking the oath of office. He is also the first sound-recorded president for a campaign speech that he gave from his front porch in Canton.

### The beginnings of the Panama Canal

President McKinley commissioned a report into a maritime highway to link the Atlantic and the Pacific across Central America, yet the Panama Canal would take another 17 years to open and not in Nicaragua as advisors initially recommended to McKinley.



***1901 – 1909***

# Theodore Roosevelt

## The 26th president of the United States led the way in proving that a politician's personality is just as important as his policies

26

**THEODORE ROOSEVELT**

**Republican, 1858 - 1919**

***Brief Bio***

**Theodore Roosevelt is often credited for helping catapult the United States to the forefront of the great powers of the world, but it wasn't easy. He faced many challenges on the road to presidency, but his progressivism outlook and larger-than-life personality have caused him to be widely considered one of the greatest presidents that the United States has ever seen.**

Theodore Roosevelt's childhood was unusual compared to most. In terms of circumstance, he was fairly fortunate: he was born in a four-storey brownstone in Manhattan, New York into an affluent family. His father, Theodore Sr, was a glass businessman and philanthropist and his mother Martha was a socialite. Despite this, things were difficult during Roosevelt's childhood.

He was a sickly, delicate child and developed a form of debilitating asthma, and had to be home-schooled all through his education as a result of his chronic illness. He often experienced sudden and intense asthma attacks during the night which caused the sensation, of being smothered to death. Roosevelt and his parents feared for his health, and doctors could find no cure. But it wasn't all bad; being home-schooled meant Roosevelt grew closer to his parents, particularly his father. It was because of his father that the young boy found the drive to better himself. One day, his father took him aside and said: "You have the mind but you have not the body... It is up to you to make your body." This piece of advice made Roosevelt determined to transform himself in his childhood, and make his body stronger.

For a boy of his health and stature, he was extremely energetic, and spent a lot of time outdoors, looking for specimens to fulfil his interest in the natural world. When he was seven, he came across a dead seal at the local market. He took home the head to study, and he and two of his cousins formed what they called the "Roosevelt Museum of Natural History". Roosevelt's childhood escapades became the beginnings of a lifelong love for zoology and the great outdoors, which would later shape the way he ran the United States. Still at a schooling age, he learnt the rudiments of taxidermy and so could often be found trudging across Oyster Bay, Long Island, looking for specimens to collect and take home. He studied all types of organic matter, from plants and fungi to insects and animal carcasses. His hands would always stink of arsenic and formaldehyde from preserving all his finds.

> During his presidency, a boxing accident involving a smashed blood vessel left Roosevelt almost completely blind in one eye

Shortly before he turned 18, Roosevelt enrolled at Harvard University in 1876 to study natural history, with the intention of pursuing a teaching career. After years of being isolated as a result of his home-schooling, he soon found he thrived in the busy college environment. He was an active member of the student body and, in order to continue improving his health, he was committed to leading what he called "the strenuous life".

But in the winter of his second year at Harvard, his life changed forever. He received an urgent telegram instructing him to rush back to New York, but by the time he got there it was too late; his father had died from intestinal tumour. The loss devastated Roosevelt. He wrote in the journal he kept: "Oh, Father, Father, how bitterly I miss you,



A keen hunter throughout his life, this photo from 1885 shows Roosevelt kitted out in full badlands hunting gear

# Life in the time of Theodore Roosevelt

## The elimination of black voting rights

Between 1890 and 1908, every state in the Deep South adopted a new state constitution to deprive black Americans the right to vote in US elections. The constitution used various methods to do so, including poll taxes, literacy tests, arbitrary registration practices and felony disenfranchisement.

## Up, up and away!

On 17 December, 1903, Orville and Wilbur Wright made history when Orville piloted the world's first powered aeroplane 20 feet above a North Carolina beach. They attempted three more flights the same day, with the most successful lasting 59 seconds and covering 852 feet.

## Devastating earthquake shakes California

Devastation ripped through Northern California on 18 April 1906, when the San Francisco Earthquake caused 3,000 deaths and over 80 per cent of the city was destroyed. The San Francisco earthquake is now widely regarded as one of the worst natural disasters in the history of the United States.

## The massacre at Wounded Knee

The now famous massacre of Wounded Knee broke out on the Lakota Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota on 29 December 1890, when a troop of US soldiers attempted to arrest Sioux chief Spotted Elk and disarm 350 of his followers.

## Lincoln is defeated

The United States mourned for one of the most influential Americans ever when President Abraham Lincoln was assassinated in Ford's theatre on 14 April 1865. He was shot in the head at point-blank range by actor John Wilkes Booth. Lincoln died the next day.

## One in a million shot

Roosevelt is often depicted as an extremely tough man, and for good reason. The adventures he had while scaling mountains, hunting game and exploring jungles seem tepid compared to the time he was shot in the chest while delivering a speech and didn't seek assistance until he was finished. It was 14 October 1912, and Roosevelt was campaigning for presidential office with the newly formed Progressive Party. He had prepared a 90-minute campaign speech that he planned to deliver outside a Milwaukee hotel. Before he could get a word out, he was shot in the chest by a local saloon keeper. His audience was none the wiser until he announced what had happened.

"Friends, I shall ask you to be quiet as possible," he said. "I don't know whether you fully understand that I have just been shot. It takes more than that to kill a Bull Moose [the nickname given to the Progressive Party]." Luckily, the bullet had passed through his breast pocket, which contained a steel eyeglass case, and through his jacket, in which he kept his 50-page speech folded in two. "The bullet is in me now," he said, "so that I cannot make a very long speech, but I will try my best." He got through the entire thing.



Roosevelt spent the years following his presidency on safari in Africa

# "His efforts helped put an end to the war, and Roosevelt became a national hero"

mourn for you and long for you!" His father was his best friend, and the greatest man that he ever knew. After his death, Roosevelt became listless and depressed.

Eventually, he returned to Harvard and became even more active, determined to get back to leading the strenuous life. He took up rowing and boxing, even placing as runner-up in a Harvard-wide boxing tournament, and continued to get stronger still. He continued his studies and indulged himself in an active student life.

In October 1878 his life changed again, but for another reason entirely: he met Alice Hathaway Lee. The moment that Roosevelt saw Alice he knew that he was going to marry her if she would take him. He was very persistent in his wooing technique and befriended and charmed half her family before Lee realised that Roosevelt was practically family too. They finally wed in October 1880, following his graduation in June. On their wedding night, Roosevelt's diary reads: "My happiness now is almost too great. I am living in a dream land. I wish it could last forver." They honeymooned in Europe and Roosevelt finally slapped his illness in the face by scaling the 15,000-foot Matterhorn in the Alps.

Hungry for knowledge, Roosevelt had every intention of continuing his studies after Harvard, and enrolled at Columbia Law School in December 1880. However, part way through the school year he got involved in politics and ended up joining the Republican Party. The pull of his new-found passion was too strong, and he dropped out of Columbia shortly after in order to pursue politics full-time. Then, in November 1881, Roosevelt became the youngest ever elected member of the New York State Assembly. He realised this was where he belonged, and gave it his all. His father had always told him, "Take care of your morals first, your health next and finally your studies." The words stuck with Roosevelt through the years, and caused him to go after politicians he believed to be corrupt. His methods presented severe political risks on his part, but it was always a good fight.

On 14 February 1884, Roosevelt was met with the greatest tragedy of his life. His mother and his wife died on the same say at the home they all shared in New York City. His mother had been battling typhoid fever, while his wife succumbed to kidney failure two days after giving birth to their daughter Alice. The condition has gone unnoticed because of her pregnancy. On that day in his diary, Roosevelt simply wrote a large "X" that proceeded, "The light has gone out of my life". He left Alice with his sister and left New York City for the Badlands of the Dakota Territory while he grieved. There he lived as a rancher and cowboy.

He didn't return to New York until 1886, but when he did he dove back into politics, even running for mayor, though unsuccessfully. In December 1886, Roosevelt married his second wife: childhood friend Edith Kermit Carow. The pair eventually had five children together: Theodore III, Kermit, Ethel, Archibald and Quentin. With his

## Defining moment

### The greatest loss
### 9 February 1878

During Roosevelt's second year at Harvard, his world is suddenly flipped upside-down by the death of his father. Theodore Sr passes away in his home in New York City after suffering from an intestinal tumour. Before he died, Roosevelt receives an urgent telegram insisting he rush home from college immediately to join his father by his bedside. Unfortunately he is too late. After his father's passing, Roosevelt becomes depressed and listless, and he fills the journal he keeps with heartbreaking entries about his overwhelming sadness. Upon his return to Harvard, he attempts to force himself back into living the "strenuous life" as he calls it.



## Timeline

1858

**A president is born**
Theodore Roosevelt Jr is born to Theodore Sr and Martha 'Mittie' Bulloch Roosevelt at 28 East 20th Street, New York City. He grows up a sickly but enthusiastic and intelligent child, and is affectionately known as 'Teedie' to his family of six.
**27 October 1858**

**Further education commences**
After being home-schooled all his life due to chronic illness, Roosevelt finally enrols at Harvard University to study natural history and finds that he thrives in the new, more social environment.
**September 1876**

**Love is in the air**
Roosevelt meets his first true love, Alice Hathaway Lee, and befriends much of her family in a long-running attempt to woo her. It works, and the couple marries on 27 October 1880.
**18 October 1878**



**The law of the land**
After graduating from Harvard, Roosevelt starts at Columbia Law School. He then drops out of the school just two years later, however, in order to pursue a full-time career in politics after joining the New York Assembly.
**December 1880**

**Deaths in the family**
Roosevelt is left heartbroken and completely devastated when his mother Martha and wife Alice die on the same day, Martha of typhoid fever and Alice of kidney failure, days after giving birth to a daughter.
**14 February 1884**

home life finally back on track, his work life started to follow suit. In 1897, he was appointed US Navy assistant secretary by President William McKinley.

At the start of the Spanish-American War in 1898, however, Roosevelt resigned his position in the US Navy in order to form and equip a volunteer cavalry unit known as the Rough Riders. Being the type of man he was, he led the unit into Cuba and quickly gained fame in the United States for his attack up Kettle Hill against heavy fire during the Battle of San Juan Hill. His efforts helped put an end to the war, and Roosevelt became a national hero. He was elected governor of New York soon after.



Two years later, McKinley appointed Roosevelt vice president after his first second-in-command Garret Hobart suddenly died of heart failure. Roosevelt's vice presidency was fairly uneventful until the Minnesota State Fair, where he thrilled supporters with a simple aphorism. He said, "Speak softly and carry a big stick, and you will go far".

> Roosevelt was a prolific author, writing a whopping 38 books, including an autobiography and a biography of Oliver Cromwell

On 6 September 1901, McKinley was assassinated and Roosevelt became the 26th president of the United States. Before he entered office, he held the belief that there was too much power in the hands of the corporate powers, and that belief showed in the way he led his people. Roosevelt based his presidency on the Square Deal, a domestic program that was formed upon three basic ideas: the conservation of natural resources, the control of corporations and consumer protection. He became a champion of the environment, and added hundreds of millions of acres to the United States' national forests.

Roosevelt's style appeared to be popular with voters when he was re-elected in his own right in 1904. During his second term in office, he continued to make the Roosevelt-magic happen. The highlights included beefing up the US Navy, completing the Panama Canal and being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for negotiating the end of the Russo-Japanese War.

When Roosevelt's presidency was finally up in 1909, he dedicated time to exploring the wilderness and living a strenuous life, starting with a two-year-long African safari with his son. Expeditions through jungles, over mountain ranges and down rivers followed. He also continued a lifelong love of writing and publishing books, articles and journals.

In 1912, Roosevelt attempted to return to politics, running against President William Taft who he had helped groom for office. He even formed a third political party called the Progressive Party to do so. The election was close, but he didn't win. It was then that he decided to call it a day.

On 6 January, 1919, Theodore Roosevelt died while he slept at his house at Sagamore Hill, New York. The cause was a coronary embolism. He was 60 years old. He was finally laid to rest at Oyster Bay, Long Island, the same place he liked to collect specimens and samples to study in his bedroom all those years ago.



## *Defining moment*

### The death of a president
### 6 September 1901

In September 1901, President William McKinley ventures out to Buffalo, New York, but is shot by an anarchist acting alone while Roosevelt hikes in the Adirondacks. Roosevelt visits the ailing president, but reports suggest his condition is improving so he bids him farewell and leaves for the west. However, McKinley worsens and Roosevelt rushes back a second time. McKinley succumbs to his wounds on 14 September, and Roosevelt is sworn into office. He becomes the 26th and youngest ever president of the United States.



## *Defining moment*

### Everyone's a winner
### 10 December 1906

After the work he did to help bring an end to the Russo-Japanese War, Roosevelt becomes the first American to win the Nobel Peace Prize. The prize-giving ceremony takes place in Oslo, Norway, but Roosevelt cannot attend until his term of presidency is over. Instead, he sends an ambassador in his place and drops by Norway on a tour of Europe after he has left office for his Nobel lecture. He is also the first statesman to win the prize, which caused controversy. In response to his win, Swedish newspapers reported that Alfred Nobel would be turning in his grave.

**The race for mayor**
Roosevelt runs for mayor of New York City but he loses to Abram Hewitt. He doesn't take the loss too hard, however, as he marries his childhood sweetheart Edith Carow in London the following month in December.
**November 1886**

**With great power**
Two years on from his mayorial election loss, the Republican Party nominate Roosevelt for governor of New York State. He is finally elected on 8 November the same year and serves until the end of 1990.
**27 September 1898**

**The vice presidency finally begins**
Roosevelt eventually reaches the White House when he is elected vice president under President William McKinley. He serves in the role from March the following year until September.
**6 November 1900**

**The people's president**
Roosevelt is re-elected in his own right. Over the following years, he establishes the US Forest Service, completes the building of the Panama Canal and also negotiates an end to the Russo-Japanese War.
**1904**

**The later years**
When Roosevelt's presidency ends, he joins his son on a two-year-long African Safari. He continues pursuing his passion for the outdoors and nature for another decade while still remaining politically active.
**March 1909**

1919

**Roosevelt's final days**
Following problems with his breathing, Roosevelt, 60, dies in his sleep at his home at Sagamore Hill. The cause is an arterial blood clot. He is laid to rest in Oyster Bay, Long Island, where he spent much of his youth.
**6 January 1919**



27

WILLIAM HOWARD TAFT
Republican, 1857 - 1930

**Brief Bio** Weighing in at over 300 pounds, the genial and famously hospitable Taft was quite literally a big character. He remains the largest ever president in US history. His period in office was most notable for the way he brought the presidency firmly into the 20th century and established the pattern for presidents to come - from building the first Oval Office to playing golf.

Taft is the only person to head both the executive and judiciary branches of the US government

*1909 – 1913*

# William Howard Taft

## Initially well-liked and respected, the upright and affable judge became a disastrous political liability

William Howard Taft was born three years before Abraham Lincoln was elected as president and died three years before Adolf Hitler became Chancellor of Germany. His life - and his presidency - spanned a time of enormous change. Unlikely as it may seem when you look at his portly figure, walrus moustache and occasional top hat, Taft was one of the first modern presidents, who helped to shape the presidency as we know it today.

Taft was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, and this was his first, unconscious step towards the presidency. Ohio dominated national politics in the period after the Civil War, and to this day no Republican has been elected president without winning Ohio, and no Democrat has managed it since John F Kennedy in 1960. Taft's hard-driving and ambitious father, Alphonso, was comfortably off rather than wealthy, but he was undoubtedly well connected, and Taft Junior benefitted from this throughout his early

## America's overseas growing pains

In the late 19th century, the US began to acquire territory outside the North American mainland, including the Philippines, Puerto Rico, Guam, Hawaii and American Samoa. The US still defined itself as anti-imperialist and this caused great unease. When there was a rebellion in the Philippines, with heavy casualties, accusations of atrocities, and a cholera epidemic that killed huge numbers of civilians, there was controversy, with even some military officers criticising the government. One officer revealed his notorious orders that "the interior of Samar must be made a howling wilderness." There were similarities with later controversies in Vietnam and elsewhere. Despite all this, Taft managed to enhance his reputation as governor of the Philippines.



career. Without the Ohio background it is doubtful that William ('Old Bill' to his friends) would have risen as quickly and as high as he did.

Having graduated from Yale in 1878, Taft studied law, was admitted to the Ohio Bar in 1880, and went on to flirt briefly with journalism, practise law, serve in some minor administrative offices and then become a judge of the Ohio Superior Court in 1887, aged 29. In 1886 he married Helen Herron, who was reputed to encourage and even direct his political ambitions – she was a strong and sometimes controversial character.

In 1890 Taft was appointed solicitor general of the United States; at 32, he was the youngest ever to hold the position. Soon after, he became a judge of the United States Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals, which was again a remarkably senior appointment for a man of his age. Taft's thoughts began to turn to the US Supreme Court, which today would be considered absurd and even presumptuous for someone in his position – it would certainly be unrealistic. For a respected and well-connected Ohioan of his time, however, it was merely fantastically ambitious, not impossible.

When he was summoned by President McKinley in 1900, Taft assumed that it concerned a Supreme Court appointment. Instead, he was asked to join a commission on the occupation of the Philippines, which had been ceded to the US by Spain in 1898. Although he was initially reluctant, Taft resigned his judgeship to become chairman of the Second Philippine Commission, and subsequently the governor of the islands. Despite the ongoing controversy surrounding the Philippines, Taft won the esteem of those he worked with and became a respected national figure. More than once he was to turn down presidential offers of a coveted place on the Supreme Court, explaining that he felt committed to the Philippines. However, there were suspicions that his ambitions were now also political, possibly as a result of his wife's influence, or pressure from the ultra-ambitious Taft clan.

In 1904, Taft returned to the US to become secretary of war – a post his father had held under Ulysses S Grant – in Theodore Roosevelt's cabinet, with the understanding that he would still take an interest in the Philippines. From there it was a short leap to become Roosevelt's nominated successor, and in 1908 he was elected president, assuming office in 1909.

Taft oversaw few outstanding legislations or foreign policy achievements, and his term of office was characterised by political failure. His wife spoke of him "not knowing or caring about the way the game of politics is played", and he managed to make even potentially popular initiatives, such as tariff reform, count against him. Taft believed that being a scrupulous administrator was enough, to secure his popularity, but it was not. His famous 'dollar diplomacy' – that it was "far better to use dollars than bullets" – also failed. In the Far East, it was simply ineffectual, while in Latin America it resulted in accusations of hypocrisy and disguised Yankee imperialism.

> Taft's love of eating opossums sparked a nationwide fad and inspired a toy, 'Billy Possum'

Taft's presidency was instead notable for his adjustment to the technologies and practices of the twentieth century. As part of his programme to modernise government administration, he built the first Oval Office. However, he refused to expand the presidential role beyond the bounds of the constitution, in contrast to his predecessor, Roosevelt, and his successor, Woodrow Wilson.

Taft's campaign for re-election was doomed from the moment his predecessor and one-time friend, patron and ally, Theodore Roosevelt decided to oppose him, first for the Republican nomination and then as an independent presidential candidate. Taft came third behind both the victor, Woodrow Wilson, and Roosevelt, failing even to win his home state of Ohio. It was a famous drubbing. Still, Taft did not seem overly concerned and when he was made Chief Justice of the Supreme Court in 1921 he seemed happier and in his proper element. It seemed that his political career was an interesting detour on the way to his true calling.



The proliferation of the mass-produced Ford Model T led to Taft purchasing the first presidential cars

## Life in the time of William Howard Taft

### Get your motor running

The first popular and affordable motor car, the Ford Model T, was released in 1908. In 1909, Taft bought the first presidential cars and built the first White House garage, doing much to make automobiles respectable to everyday Americans. Previously, they had been considered the playthings of the rich.

### Combatting an old evil

In 1909 the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the leading African-American civil rights group, was founded. Racism remained prevalent and racial violence was endemic. Taft abhorred racial prejudice and was a fervent believer in the rule of law, but his policies were often weakened by political concerns.

### Way out west

Two new states were created during Taft's presidency: New Mexico (the 47th) and Arizona (the 48th). Both were in the west, signalling the final decline of the wild 'Old West'. The last stagecoach robbery occurred in 1916. Only two further states (Alaska and Hawaii) have been added since these two.

### From Pole to Pole

The early twentieth century was the golden age of arctic exploration. While British and Norwegian explorers like Scott, Shackleton and Amundesen were famously active, two Americans were rivals in reaching the North Pole: Frederick Cook and Robert Peary. Their competing claims caused a lively newspaper controversy throughout Taft's presidency.

### The FBI is coming

Shortly before Taft took office, the Bureau of Investigation was formed. It began with just thirty-four employees and its first major investigation started in 1910, while Taft was president. In 1935, five years after Taft's death, it was renamed the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

1913 – 1921

# Woodrow Wilson

## From an unusual election to the outbreak of a world war, Woodrow Wilson's presidency saw a whirlwind of economic and social change

Having led the United States through war and helped to create the League of Nations, Thomas Woodrow Wilson achieved a lot in his eight years as president. Born on 28 December 1856 in Staunton, Virginia, Wilson's family had Scottish heritage and were devout Presbyterians. The third of four children born to Jessie Janet Woodrow and Joseph Ruggles Wilson, the family didn't stay long in Staunton and moved to Augusta, Georgia with the young Tommy, aged just one. From then it was on to Columbia, South Carolina where his father, a Presbyterian minister, taught at the Columbia Theological Seminary.

At the age of five, Wilson saw the ravages of war first hand as the US Civil War broke out. Living in the South, he was surrounded by supporters of the Confederate cause. His parents became involved in the conflict with his mother nursing wounded soldiers from the battlefield. The war had a profound effect on the young Wilson, who recalled looking into the face of the defeated General Robert E Lee.

When he first started school, Wilson didn't take to education and initially suffered from poor results. Instead, he acquired the oratory and debating skills from his father who, as a minister, had these talents in abundance. This became a kind of passion for Wilson and contemporary scholars believe he may have had some sort of dyslexia that hampered his exam results but helped his discussion skills. Either way, by 1875 he had enrolled at the local Davison College but before starting his studies, he made a U-turn and moved north to Princeton, which was then known as the College of New Jersey. This was followed by a law degree at the University of Virginia and a PhD in political science and history at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland. This period of Wilson's life wasn't just limited to studying and in 1883 he met Ellen Louise Axon, who he would go on to have three daughters with. His education culminated in a thesis entitled 'Congressional Government', launching a career with a professorship at Princeton in 1890 where he was later voted the most popular teacher on campus for his caring character and inspiring nature. It was while in this job that Wilson suffered his first stroke in May 1906 and a year later, Wilson's marriage was on the rocks after he had an affair while visiting Bermuda. The couple talked things through and remained husband and wife and Wilson's health also stabilised.

Woodrow Wilson is the only president to be buried in Washington, DC

His experience at university led Wilson to turn his political orientation to a being a social Democrat. His meteoric political rise began in 1910 when he was voted governor of New Jersey and two years on, his stock had risen even further and he was nominated as the Democratic presidential candidate for the upcoming election. The following year, Wilson became the 28th president of the US but only after what was an unusual process. He ran against Republican



Woodrow Wilson is sworn in as president on 4 March 1913

## Life in the time of Woodrow Wilson

### Japan sets its sights west

Japan thrust itself onto the international stage as it exposed the weakness of the Chinese Empire. Tussling over rule in Korea, war was declared in 1894, but within a year the Chinese sued for peace. The war initiated a period of dominance for Japan in the Far East.

### Birth of the Gatling gun

Invented by Dr Richard Gatling in 1862, the six-barrelled weapon was the first true rapid fire weapon. The gun was invented during the American Civil War, but only achieved prominence after the war's end. The gun was unreliable but was a game changer for the future of warfare.

### The origin of the Ashes

Australia's victory over England in a cricket match in 1882 initiated a long-lasting sporting rivalry. A London journalist described the shock defeat as the 'death of English cricket' and on the return tour of Australia, a pair of wooden bails were burnt and their ashes put into an urn.

### Queen Victoria dies

The reign of Britain's second longest-serving monarch came to an end as Victoria died aged 81 in 1901. Her tenure oversaw an industrial revolution in Britain and the continued growth of empire. She had become almost a recluse after the death of her husband, Albert, and several assassination attempts.

### Invention of the telephone

Alexander Graham Bell will forever be credited with the invention, but there was controversy for the rights to the invention of the telephone. Other inventors such as Innocenzo Manzetti, Elisha Gray and Charles Bourseul all claimed to have invented it before Bell but never obtained the official patent to prove so.


28
WOODROW WILSON
Democrat, 1856 - 1924
Brief Bio
Both a scholar and an orator, Woodrow Wilson led the USA through World War I and various other conflicts closer to home. He also created the Federal Reserve and gave American women the vote, leaving a legacy of voting rights, business reform and true attempts at world peace.

## The Mexican Revolution

With a certain conflict going on in Europe at the time, it's easy to forget how bloody and significant the Mexican Revolution was. A ten-year struggle ended with the fall of a 30-year-long dictatorship that had changed the social climate of the country. The people had long voiced their discontent towards president Porfirio Díaz, whose policies favoured only the elite. Revolutionary Francisco Madero was defeated in a rigged election in 1910 and this was the final straw for many as revolt turned to revolution. Government strongholds were raided by guerrilla leaders and Díaz was out of office within a year. Madero's regime was doomed from the start and the slow pace of reform dissatisfied other guerrilla leaders. Civil war was upon the nation.

The US waded into the conflict in 1915 with President Wilson declaring his support for one of the leaders, Venustiano Carranza. This enraged Carranza's new main rival Pancho Villa, who raided towns over the border and murdered 17 US citizens in January 1916. Carranza successfully became president but by 1920 he too had fallen from grace. Soldier and statesmen Álvaro Obregón became leader and guided Mexico into an era of sporadic violence but a more stable leadership.



A 1914 cartoon suggesting how President Wilson was fueling the business prosperity pump with his own new legislation

William Howard Taft but former president Theodore Roosevelt, unhappy with his successor as Republican leader, formed the Progressive Party and split the vote, allowing Democrat Wilson a runaway victory. Wilson's first act while in power was what he called the 'Triple Wall of Privilege'. Beginning with the Underwood-Simmons Act, tax rates were reduced and loans were made more accessible to the average American. Now, small business could compete with the elite industrialists throughout the nation. This was followed by the 1914 Clayton Antitrust Act that allowed labour unions to conduct strikes, boycotts and picketing. The Federal Reserve System was overhauled to regulate the economy, a procedure that is still place today, and the tax system was altered so the wealthy would be forced to pay a higher amount than the poorer in society. All seemed rosy for the new president, but a storm was brewing in the old world. Wilson's first year turned out to be bittersweet after his wife died from kidney disease, leaving him in a daze for days. He only eventually moved on a few years later when he became romantically involved with widow Edith Bolling Galt. They married in December 1915 and Wilson was so trustworthy of his new wife that he even allowed her to access confidential Oval Office documents.

When World War I broke out in Europe in 1914, Wilson took action and declared his country neutral, later adopting the winning campaign slogan 'He kept us out of war' during the 1916 election. A peace protocol was sent to Britain with




A Liberty Loan drive in front of City Hall, New Orleans. A banner reads "Food will win the war - don't waste it"

the USA promising to send money and munitions across the Atlantic but the proposal was flatly rejected. The USA even mediated with Germany but this also came to nothing. The turning point came in 1917 when the sinking of the Lusitania and the continued torpedoing of American ships by unrestricted German submarine warfare, led Wilson to ask Congress to go to war. The US entered the war as an 'associated power' in April of that year and the US 'Doughboys' helped turn the war in the favour of Britain and France. After Germany's surrender, Wilson proposed his 'Fourteen Points' ahead of the meeting at Versailles to discuss the creation of the new League of Nations and above all, world peace. He, like British Prime Minister David Lloyd George, wanted to a tow a more moderate line with the defeated Germany but the French Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau won out with his harsher methods. Another decision went

> 'Woodrow' was Wilson's mother's maiden name, but he was known by his real first name 'Tommy' in his youth

### *Defining moment*
### Presidential election
**1912**

The 1912 US election was a three horse race. Current president Taft appealed to the nation's big businesses, while Wilson and Roosevelt had the support of the middle and lower classes. Wilson gained the upper hand when he outlined his vision of a president that could inspire the middle classes to take on the country's largest firms. In the end, he benefitted further from Roosevelt splitting from the Republican Party. This divided his rivals' votes, allowing him to get the upper hand. Overall the three men oversaw what was known as the 'Progressive Era' in the United States.

### *Defining moment*
### The Treaty of Versailles
**28 June 1919**

British Prime Minister David Lloyd George, French Prime Minister Frances Clemenceau and Wilson draw up terms for the fate of the defeated Germany and Austria-Hungary. Each leader brought their own terms to the table and despite Wilson's plea for a 'fair and lasting peace', public anger means Clemenceau's aggressive policies are favoured. The result of the treaty is the Alsace Lorraine being given to France along with the German Saar coalfields. Major cuts to the armed forces and huge reparation payments bring Germany to its knees and inadvertently, the big three have set the wheels in motion for World War II.

## *Timeline*

1856

**A president is born**
Thomas Woodrow Wilson is born on the 28 December in Staunton, Virginia. The son of a preacher man, he suffers in his school years due to what is believed to be dyslexia.
**1856**



**University of Virginia**
Wilson enters university with the aim of being a lawyer but despite passing his exams in 1882, he changes tack and becomes a political science professor at Princeton University.
**1879**

**Elected president of Princeton University**
The popular Wilson teaches at Princeton for over 15 years and serves as president for another eight, showcasing his outstanding oratory and communication skills as he inspires the students.
**1902**

**Into the White House**
A Republican split helps award the presidency to Wilson. One of first things he does is the Owen-Glass or Federal Reserve Act, which established regional reserve banks in the USA.
**1913**

**Occupation of Haiti**
After the assassination of the Haitian president in July, Wilson sends US Marines onto the island in an attempt to maintain order. The occupation lasts until 1934.
**1915**

against Wilson back home as Congress declined the opportunity to join the League of Nations, weakening the ultimately doomed League as it was just starting out.

After the dust from the Great War had settled, Wilson's first act was to address the rapidly escalating women's suffrage movement. Women having the vote wasn't something Wilson had thought long and hard about and he was initially against the movement when a group of suffragists held a protest outside the White House that turned violent and resulted in several arrests. Wilson was initially appalled by their actions but changed tack after hearing of police brutality towards the women, sympathising him to the cause. In January 1918, in a speech to the Senate, he endorsed a woman's right to vote as well as personal written appeals to members of Congress. This resulted in the passing of the 19th Amendment on 18 August 1920.

As well as his initial resistance to women having the vote, Wilson has been criticised for his allowance of the Jim Crow segregation laws and a foreign policy that brought mixed results. His lax attitude towards the treatment of African Americans is a major sticking point in any analysis of his presidency and was a devastating blow to the African Americans of the US who had been convinced that Wilson would offer an improvement on the harsh conditions under Taft and Roosevelt. It was completely at odds with Wilson's otherwise democratic and peaceful visions for the world.

As for foreign policy, a treaty with Columbia formally apologised for American aggression during the 1903 Panama Revolution while the 1912 Panama Canal Act prevented US ships from paying a toll to access the canal. However, foreign relations took a turn for the worse during the forced occupation of Nicaragua in 1914 and similar events against political rebels in Haiti and the Dominican Republic in the following two years. Most prominent though was the messy American involvement in the Mexican Revolution. These heavy handed military responses were completely at odds with Wilson's successful handling of the United States' role in World War I and it is claimed that he struggled to agree with the Republican majority in the Senate.

While campaigning for the USA to join the League of Nations, Wilson fell ill from exhaustion and suffered the second serious stroke of his life but he recovered enough to accept the Nobel Peace Prize in 1920 for his efforts for post-war peace. He never recovered fully from his stroke, however, and his wife now had to help him with decision-making. Her help was so frequent that many saw her as the first female US president. The now disabled Wilson left office in 1921 after being physically unable to campaign for another term after his cerebral haemorrhage. He moved to a private residence in Washington, DC and retired there until his death on 3 February 1924. He is buried at the Washington National Cathedral.

Wilson's face adorns the $100,000 dollar bill used in the Federal Reserve

Wilson received a warm welcome in Europe. He was the first president to visit the continent while in office

"Women having the vote wasn't something Wilson had thought about and he was initially against the movement"

## *Defining moment*

### Birth of the League of Nations

**1920**

The League of Nations was created to ensure that conflicts like World War I would never happen again. Headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, it was first proposed by Wilson as part of his Fourteen Points proposal. The League had the power to call on nations to discuss disputes and could dish out economic sanctions against aggressor countries. However, this involved countries being a member and as Germany was not invited, it could act without fear and it did when the Nazi regime came to power. Even more humiliating was the fact that, despite Wilson's pleas, the USA didn't join either. The League had failed already.



The harsh terms laid out by the Treaty of Versailles enraged both the German people and members of the new Weimar elite

**To war in Europe**
Despite previously having the campaign slogan 'He kept us out of the war', Wilson's hand is forced after the sinking of the Lusitania and continued German submarine activity in the Atlantic.
**1917**

**Fourteen Points**
After the war's end, Wilson draws up the 'Fourteen Points', an international peace plan that proposes a peace plan for Versailles including an idea for a League of Nations.
**1918**

**Nobel Prize winner/ Paris peace conference**
Wilson's role as the architect behind the League of Nations does not go unnoticed and the president wins a Nobel Peace Prize despite the USA refusing to approve membership to the League.
**1919**

**Out of office**
Despite suffering his second stroke, Wilson continues on as president until 1921. He is helped through by wife Edith, who some say became 'the first female president'.
**1921**

1924

**Death**
Spending his remaining years seriously disabled, Woodrow Wilson passes away in his home in Washington DC aged 67 on 3 February. He is buried at Washington National Cathedral.
**1924**



**29**

**WARREN G HARDING**
**Republican, 1865 – 1923**

**Brief Bio**
During his time in office and even though he overturned some progressive politics, Warren G Harding was thought to have conducted himself reasonably well. So much so that, upon his death, a nation mourned. But when the truth about the administration was later revealed, his three years in office were seen as the most corrupt of all time.

Warren G Harding was never directly implicated in the corruption scandals which rocked his administration

*1921 – 1923*

# Warren G Harding

Harding's administration is believed to have been the most corrupt of any president, covering up scandal after scandal

There are some things you do not expect a president of America to say. "I am not fit for this office and should never have been here" is one of them. Yet uttered to Columbia University president Nicholas Murray Butler in 1922, these were the words of Warren G Harding himself and unfortunately, many would come to agree with his pessimistic outlook.

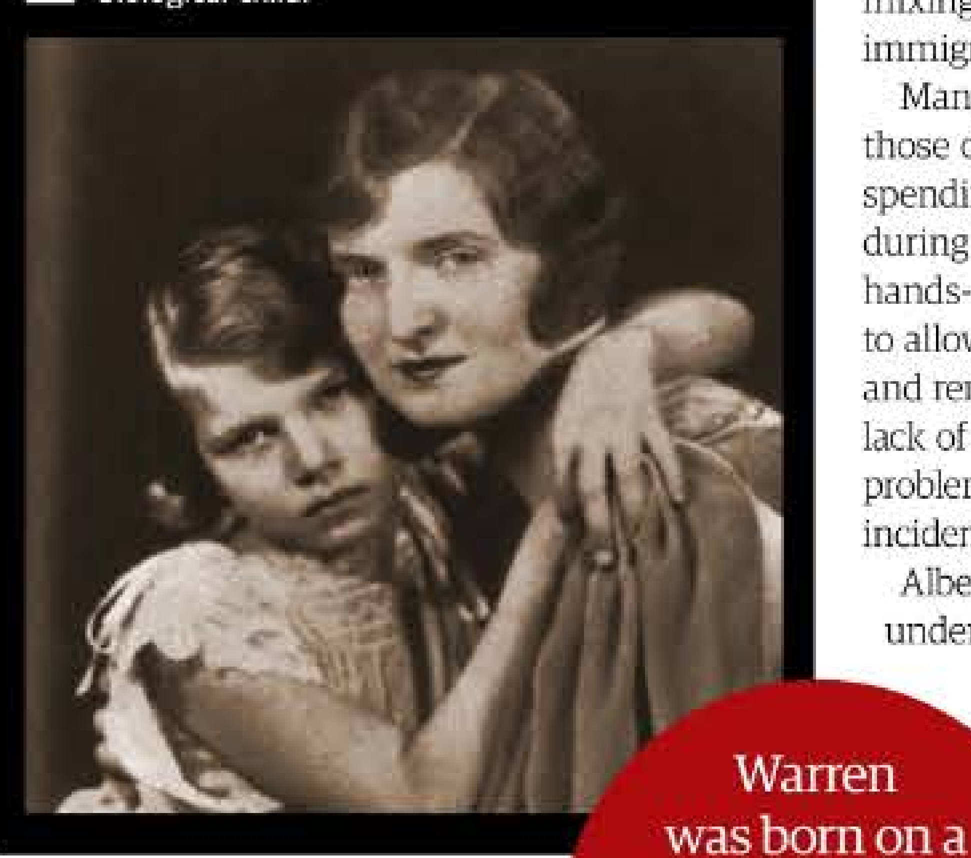
Harding was the 29th US president and was inaugurated in 1921. He rode on a ticket of stability – "a return to normalcy" – promising to put America back on its feet following the arduous years of World War I. He was rather out of his depth, a man primarily of style rather than substance but, as Harry Daugherty who had pushed for Harding to become the Republican nominee in 1920 said, he at least "looked like a president."

It was Harding's wife, Florence, rather than the man himself, who dearly wanted Harding to push for office. The pair had married in 1891 when he

## The president's child

In 1927, one of Harding's string of lovers, Nan Britton who was 31 years his junior, wrote a book in which she made claims that the pair had a daughter called Elizabeth. The book, *The President's Daughter*, added to the volume of scandal which engulfed Harding in death but it also led to Britton being vilified by the American people for offering no concrete proof.

In 2015, descendants of the Harding family approached Britton's grandson, James Blaesing, and a DNA test was performed. In August that year, the results showed that a grandnephew and grandniece of Harding were second cousins of Blaesing and proved Elizabeth to be Harding's biological child.



was 25 and she was 31. Florence was said to be energetic and ambitious but whether she had a great influence on him is uncertain. What is known is that she had been by his side during his days as a newspaper publisher in a small town in Ohio and that she had helped his four-page weekly *Marion Star* to flourish. In doing so it allowed the former newspaper reporter - who had bought the paper for $300 - time to schmooze with his close business friends, and his many associates in local government.

> Warren was born on a farm as the eldest of eight children by Phoebe and George Harding

As a good orator and a member of many corporate organisations, Harding moved in powerful circles and became a firm believer in the politics of the Republican Party. In 1899, he was elected a state senator for Ohio and became a lieutenant governor in 1903 for a year. He failed to become the governor in 1910 but was elected to the United States Senate in 1914. Chosen by the Republican Party as their nominee, he won the presidential election of 1920 with 60 per cent of the popular vote against Democrat James M Cox.

One of the key questions asked of Harding during his presidential campaign was his position on the League of Nations, an international body which was being set up following the war to help maintain world peace. He evaded answers until he became president, when he pledged his opposition. His predecessor, President Woodrow Wilson, had tried to win Senate approval for America's sign-up but Harding's subsequent stance killed all future hope and it was feared that the country would become isolationist.

Even so, Harding oversaw much change at home. He signed the Budget and Accounting Act of 1921 which provided a national budget system and allowed for an independent audit of government accounts. Taxes were reduced for those in power, he advocated civil rights for African Americans and he wanted equality of education. Harding also signed the Sheppard-Towner Maternity Act which funded child and health centres and sought to look after ill children. But he was against racial mixing and the Per Centum Act of 1921 reduced immigration numbers.

Many of Harding's policies sought to reverse those of his predecessor and they lifted the spending control which had been put in place during World War I. At the same time, he was a hands-off president in many respects, preferring to allow his cabinet members to do the work and remain the handsome figurehead. But his lack of true control over his administration led to problems, the most notable of which was a bribery incident known as the Teapot Dome scandal.

Albert Fall was the secretary of the interior under Harding and he was found, during the president's administration, to be dishing out cheap drilling licenses on federal land in Wyoming and California to his friends in the oil industry, in return for generous bribes. The wrongdoing only came to light after Harding's time as president; he died of a heart attack while in office at the age of 57, meaning that he never witnessed the fallout that so badly tarnished his memory.

The furore dragged on for years with Fall becoming the first ex-cabinet member to be jailed for committing a crime during time in office in 1931. Harding had known there were problems within his administration and he felt betrayed by some of those around him but he was loathe to make them public and that was unforgivable in the eyes of American citizens.

It didn't help that Fall was only one of a few government officials feathering their own nests. Harding knew Charles Forbes, director of the Veterans Bureau, had illegally sold government medical supplies, for example, and he was aware of a corrupt group called the Ohio Gang, headed by the private secretary of Attorney General Harry Daugherty. Little wonder a poll in 1948 would rank him bottom in terms of presidential popularity.

And yet the scandals continued to emerge. In 1964, letters from Harding to a long-term mistress called Carrie Fulton Philips were unearthed. They were written before Harding became president, but only serviced to damage his reputation further. Some historians have tried to revise the thinking about his political impact but there is no escaping that his name will be forever entrenched in mud.



Harding ran a highly successful campaign in 1920, defeating Democratic challengers James M Cox and Franklin D Roosevelt

## Life in the time of Warren G Harding

### Women could vote

The 1920 election was the first in which women across the United States could vote. The 1916 election had only allowed women in 30 states to participate rather than the full 48 four years later, a victory for women's suffrage following decades of struggle.

### Alcohol was banned

Prohibition was law throughout Harding's presidency. It forbade anyone from selling, producing, importing or transporting alcoholic beverages and it also led to a large rise in organised crime, with Mafia groups organising huge bootlegging operations to satiate a nation's thirst.

### Radio becomes popular

Commercial radio stations began broadcasting on 27 August 1920 in Detroit and Pittsburgh. The following year WBZ in Springfield MA was the first to get a commercial license and by 1922 radio boomed in popularity, opening up communication like never before. WBZ radio continues to operate from Boston today.

### Negro National League

Organised sport was segregated and so in baseball in 1920, the Negro National League was formed by Rube Foster for African-Americans. It grew over the early part of the decade as it expanded into the south. The Great Depression caused it to disband in 1931 with the Chicago American Giants having won five of the 12 titles.

### Charlie Chaplin dominates

The comic actor and director Charlie Chaplin co-founded United Artists in 1919 and his first feature-length movie, *The Kid*, was released in 1921. His silent era movies were popular. *The Kid* was the second-highest grossing film of 1921 and it is believed to be one of the era's greatest movies.




## 1923 – 1929

# Calvin Coolidge

A reserved small government conservative by nature, Coolidge would become known for his decisive nature in the White House

John Calvin Coolidge Jr was born on 4 July 1872 in Plymouth Notch, Vermont. The eldest of two sons, Coolidge grew up in an typical middle-class family of the late 19th century. Neither poor nor particularly rich, the Coolidge name was still a well-distributed one thanks to his father's experience in politics (he eventually became a justice of the peace) and agriculture.

Most of his family had a background in farming, but the younger Coolidge showed an aptitude for learning at an early age and soon excelled through his education, earning a reputation as a voracious debater. After completing his graduation, Coolidge moved to Northampton, Massachusetts under his father's insistence and pursued a career in law. By 1897, he'd trained as a county law lawyer and soon opened his own practice.

It was here that Coolidge's political destiny began to manifest. Known for a quiet demeanour outside the courtroom, but a shrewd and diligent manner within, he was soon elected to the local city council in 1898. Identifying with the conservatism of the Republican Party, Coolidge found a position that supported the issues he believed in, including fiscal conservatism and the support of the suffragette movement.

From there he began a steady ascendance through the world of state politics that brought him to almost every significant seat of office Massachusetts could provide. He became a member of the local House of Representatives (echoing his

## Coolidge vs the Boston Police strike

So what caused the Boston Police Department to go on strike in 1919? It all centred around the BPD's plans to set up an independent union and the government's opposition to such a move. When the leaders of the move to unionise were suspended, three quarters of the city's police force went on strike on 9 September, causing riots and civil disobedience across Boston. Coolidge called in the National Guard to restore order and personally oversaw the remaining BPD officers. In an age of constant fear over Communist invasion, Coolidge believed the police had a duty to protect the people and therefore did not have the right to strike.



father's achievement), where he made a name for himself by refusing to follow the popular vote of his fellow Republicans.

In 1911, Coolidge ran for State Senator and defeated his Democrat rival by a considerable margin. Serving for just under three years as Senator, Coolidge eventually became president of the Senate in 1914 before becoming lieutenant governor two years later. It was then that he began to place his focus on the role that would catapult him onto the national stage: state governor.

It was here Coolidge would garner the attention of the higher powers in the capital. After winning the seat by the slimmest of margins, he faced the biggest obstacle of his career thus far: the Boston Police strike (see Coolidge vs the Boston Police strike). His refusal to kowtow to the demands of the strike and his calm demeanour in the face of such a widely covered event spoke volumes.

More importantly, his public speeches regarding the need to protect public safety sent his approval rating soaring through the roof and as the 1920 presidential election season loomed, Coolidge was nominated as the Republican candidate for the vice presidency. Attached to the presidential ticket of popular figure Warren G Harding, Coolidge was now being readied for a position in the most powerful office in the nation.

While Harding's connection to corrupt officials within government and the military would posthumously erode his popularity, the duo of Harding and Coolidge provided the perfect mixture of charm and composure and the duo won the election by a landslide. However, Harding died three years later of a sudden cerebral haemorrhage on 2 August 1923 and Coolidge was sworn in as president a few hours later.

His policies of transparency (especially in the wake of corruption unearthed in the wake of Harding's death) would serve him well, and he successfully won the 1924 presidential election in a decisive victory over his Democrat opponent. Now reaffirmed by public confidence, Coolidge was finally able to pursue those key tenets and beliefs of his political idealism: he enforced considerable tax cuts, limited government spending and staffed regulatory commissions with those sympathetic to building the United States' domestic businesses.

Those policies helped foster the cultural and economic boom of the 'Roaring Twenties', a period that stood in stark contrast to the reserved and sombre man at the helm of the nation's future. Spending and lending skyrocketed as Americans embraced excess, while Coolidge's high tariffs on imported goods also fostered a renewed domestic confidence in the strength the nation's own products and industries.

> Under Coolidge, the United States saw its first laws designed to regulate radio broadcasts passed

His popular public image led many to believe he would easily win re-election in the 1928 presidential election, but the death of his father and youngest son, coupled with the monumental stress of office, were enough to convince Coolidge otherwise and he announced his desire to leave office at the end of his term at the beginning of 1929, to the considerable surprise of some.

In October, the US economy's excessive spending sparked the Stock Market Crash and the nation was sent spiralling into an era of depression. Were Coolidge's small governmental policies solely to blame for the nation's selfish notions of economic status? Not entirely – those seeds had be sown long before Coolidge took office, but his failure to aid the depressed agricultural sector and the uneven distribution of wealth caused by his considerable tax cuts accelerated the process.

By the time of his death on 5 January 1933, his popularity had largely soured among the American public, with many demonising his policies as the root cause of the country's destitution. Coolidge was a man who believed in empowering the people – it just so happened that empowerment also led many of them to act irrationally, forever binding his American conservatism with the contrasting implosion of the economy.



Coolidge poses for a photograph with his vice president, Charles G Dawes

# Life in the time of Calvin Coolidge

### Economic expansion

Under Coolidge's presidency, the United States saw a proactive shift away from the economic malaise of Harding's time in office. Taxes were cut and only the top 2% of earners paid income tax, while Coolidge shaved a quarter of the country's federal debt.

### Consumer society

The national wealth of the United States practically doubled between 1920 and 1929, which saw a rise in a consumer culture that the nation had never experienced. From fashion to music and beyond, national trends in all areas of culture swept cities and towns across the land.

### An equal voice

The 19th Amendment, introduced into US law in 1920, finally gave women the right to vote. And while society was still far from equal, female citizens enjoyed, to a certain extent, a greater sense of cultural freedom. This also led to the popularisation of the 'flapper' image – women who dressed how they wished and said what they wanted.

### The age of jazz

Music exploded into life during this period, and the blues-infused tones of jazz became the sound of the times. Jazz clubs sprung up across the country, radio stations embraced it wholeheartedly and phonograph sales skyrocketed (100 million records were sold in 1927 alone).

### Prohibition

Perhaps one of the most famous factors of the 1920s, Prohibition began with the passing of the 18th Amendment. This new law prohibited the sale of liquor with a proof higher than 0.5%. This drove the sale of alcohol underground and facilitated the rise of gangsters and organised crime.



31

HERBERT HOOVER
Republican, 1874 - 1964

**Brief Bio**
A man of the people who just happened to be a self-made millionaire, would-be economic visionary Herbert Hoover rose to power on a wave of popularity. But when the Great Depression tore through America in the first years of his reign, Hoover found himself shouldering the blame, his reputation ruined for decades.

In 1927 Hoover became the first person to appear on television in America, during a demonstration for the media

*1929 – 1933*

# Herbert Hoover

## Herbert Hoover's dreams of a rich United States collapsed alongside its shattered economy, but was he really the man to blame?

Herbert Hoover became infamous as the president who presided over the Great Depression, a man who stepped back when his country needed him most. His handling of the crisis caused his downfall, but was there more to Hoover than the dam and the depression, or did his economic policies bring a nation to its knees?

Hoover was born in Iowa as the son of a Quaker; orphaned at the age of nine, his new guardians instilled in their charge a strong work ethic and though academic success did not come easily to the young man, once he was admitted to Stanford, his fortunes took a turn for the better. As a mining engineer Hoover travelled the world, making his name in Australia before moving to China with his young family. He was there when the Boxer Rebellion broke out and found himself invaluable when US Marines called upon his local knowledge to navigate the relatively unknown local terrain. A return to Australia followed, by which time Hoover had already made his fortune.

His first entry into public life came at the outbreak of World War I when he planned and implemented measures aimed at bringing American citizens home from Europe. His cool

head, financial astuteness and gift for organisation proved vital as he took charge of the distribution of money, food, travel documents and anything else that might be required to ensure no Americans would be stranded overseas. Upon hearing of the crisis in Belgium, where German occupation had resulted in serious food shortages, he took on his next mission and employed the same approach to ensure that relief was distributed where it was most needed. Unsurprisingly, Hoover's name was soon known in the highest circles and in 1917, Democrat President Woodrow Wilson appointed him as head of the US Food Administration.

Now firmly enmeshed in American politics, Hoover continued his aid efforts both at home and abroad, impressing Wilson and leading him to conclude that Hoover was his natural successor as president. Hoover, however, had other ideas; never a Democrat, it was in the new Republican administration that he finally joined the cabinet as Secretary of Commerce.

Passionate about efficiency in business at home and making the best of American opportunities overseas, he introduced an enthusiastic programme of policies, including the introduction of long-term mortgages intended to ensure that people could own their homes outright.

On top of that, Hoover's efforts to bring aid to those hit by the Great Mississippi Flood of 1927 showed off his credentials as a man of the people. With his reputation and profile riding high, when the presidential election rolled around in 1928, he knew that it would be his year.

Hoover won by a landslide and the order of the day was reform. He put in place numerous programmes that he believed would improve the lot of all Americans, young or old, rich or poor. He envisioned a partnership between private and public bodies in which they fostered one another and strengthened the economy without central intervention yet these beliefs, honed during his years as an engineer, would meet their match when the Great Depression shattered the United States.

Hoover's adventurous first lady, Lou, carried a pistol when she lived in China and wasn't afraid to use it

When the stock market crashed, the economy collapsed. Businesses closed, unemployment soared and even banks were shutting their doors as borrowers defaulted on their loans in their thousands. People lost their homes and the ironically-named Hooverville shanty towns began to appear, as the homeless multitude searched desperately for shelter.

Hoover attempted to put in place financial measures that would help the hardest hit. Still he maintained that caring for the disenfranchised in a community was not strictly a government responsibility, but a local one, a mantra that led some to conclude that he had chosen to distance himself at his country's time of need. For Hoover, the presidency he had entered with such high hopes had become a poisoned chalice and though he grudgingly decided to run for a second term, Hoover had no serious hope of winning. On the campaign trail he was jeered, his train splattered with eggs and his speeches heckled; when the votes were counted, he had lost the presidency to Franklin D Roosevelt.

Hoover left the White House not a broken man, but a changed one. Bitter and disillusioned, he convinced himself that the Democrats had undermined him, driving the country to ruin so that they might ride to the rescue. His retirement from public life brought a new peace and he took comfort in writing, fishing and philanthropy. He briefly dreamt of running for the presidency again in 1936 and 1940, but in the end his tarnished reputation put paid to the schemes.

When President Truman needed someone to visit war-ravaged Germany in 1946 he turned to Hoover, remembering his skills both during and after WWI. It was the start of the long road that would rebuild his public standing.

Ill health blighted the former president's later years, but by the time Herbert Hoover died in 1964, his standing was restored. The three decades that had passed since Hoover's presidency had done much to rehabilitate this once maligned statesman and prove that he was capable of far more than his ill-fated single term suggested.

## The Great Depression

When the Wall Street Crash shook the American economy in 1929, the Great Depression followed in its wake. In a country rife with debt, where banks had issued loans freely and the public had happily taken them, when manufacturing slowed and businesses began to close, the impact was devastating. Unemployment rose at an unprecedented rate and when even the banks began to close their doors, homelessness soared. The Great Depression became a defining moment in modern American history, capturing the imagination of authors and artists and shaking the country for a generation.





Though he was left embittered after his time in office, Hoover would eventually rebuild his shattered reputation

## Life in the time of Herbert Hoover

### America on wheels

In 1908, the Model T Ford hit the market and within a decade, it was the most popular car on America's roads. Affordable to buy and cheap to run, the Model T brought the fun of motoring to the working man and became an American icon.

### Alcohol dries up

With the introduction of Prohibition in 1920, sale and production of alcohol became illegal in the United States. Bootleggers fed the need for booze, organised crime grew rich on the profits and speakeasies became the place to meet until prohibition ended in 1933.

### The talkies arrive

1927 saw the release of *The Jazz Singer*, the first talking picture. Starring Al Jolson, the film revolutionised the cinema business and as sound became cheaper and more popular audiences began to desert silent movies, some careers were ended for good.

### Presidents under fire

During Hoover's lifetime, three US Presidents were assassinated and five survived attempts on their lives. Among the lucky ones was Hoover himself, who escaped a would-be bomber during a 1928 trip to Argentina. His captured assassin, an anarchist name Severino Di Giovanni, was executed.

### The frozen food revolution

In 1930, Clarence Birdseye launched a new range of frozen vegetables, swiftly adding meat and fish options to his offerings. Frozen food brought a new, convenient approach to shopping and cooking to the American home and made Birdseye a rich man and a household name that endures to this day.

1933 – 1945

# Franklin D Roosevelt

## At the height of the Great Depression an unlikely candidate stepped forward to help the US through some of its darkest years

When Franklin D Roosevelt won his first presidential election in 1933 he was taking command of a country in crisis. He ran on the Democratic ticket with a desire to help the average American citizen. He had his job cut out for him as the national average rate for unemployment was one in four, but in some cities and industries that figure was as high as 50 per cent. A staggering 13 million Americans were without work and some were going hungry. To make matters worse, the country was also in dire financial straits. Since the crash on Wall Street 4,000 banks had closed for good, and by 1933 that number rose to more than 9,000, with $2.5 billion in lost deposits. This resulted in millions of Americans losing their savings - if they arrived at the bank too late, there would simply be no money to withdraw. The panics raised troubling questions about credit value and many started to question capitalism itself. Something needed to be done to avert catastrophe. Acting as soon as he entered office, Roosevelt and Congress declared a four-day 'bank holiday' and emergency banking acts to help stem the outpouring of the nation's wealth. He also managed to instill confidence in the country with his rousing inauguration speech featuring the quote, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself".

> Franklin D Roosevelt is the only president to have been elected four times, with the support of 36 out of 48 states in the last election before his death

Roosevelt sought to rectify these problems with a range of domestic programs called the New Deal. It focused on what were known as the 'three Rs', relief, recovery and reform. Relief was the immediate action that was taken to halt further economic failure. Recovery saw temporary programs implemented to restart consumer spending and reform saw more permanent programmes put in place to avoid another crash and safeguard savings. With these actions the American people began to see hope in the new Democratic Party. The Republicans under Hoover had said the worst was over and only hard work and determination would see the United States though, but these had actually turned out to be either dismal lies or woeful predictions.

Some of Roosevelt's more conservative supporters felt betrayed by his actions, however. Indeed many of those from inside his own party viewed him with disdain, seeing him as rich, spoiled and unwilling to cooperate. Here was a man who was taking money away from big business and then reinvesting it into the working man. Under Roosevelt, a huge federal bureaucracy would grow that was designed to prop up the average American who was down on his luck. This might seem a little surprising considering his childhood and background.



32

**FRANKLIN D ROOSEVELT**

**Democrat, 1882 - 1945**

**Brief Bio**

The only president to be elected four times, Franklin D Roosevelt helped the US to transition out of the Great Depression with his revoltionary New Deal. He would later oversee his country's entry into World War II following the bombing of Pearl Harbor, and remains one of the most significant figures in American history.


The last photograph of FDR, taken the day before his death

# Life in the time of Franklin D Roosevelt

## Dance to forget

Some of the Roaring Twenties' nightlife carried over into the next decade, with flocks of young people descending on ballrooms and dance halls where the swing bands would play. This would serve as a welcome distraction from the realities of real life.

## A call to serve your country

For the first time in its history the US initiated a peacetime draft for men from 21-36 years of age in 1940. FDR was famous for promising the mothers of the United States that he would not send their sons to fight in foreign wars, WWII would change that.

## The United States had become isolationist

After WWI many Americans were in favour of adopting an isolationist policy. Keen to avoid more bloodshed that they had witnessed just a few years previously, anti-war feelings were strong even as the Axis powers ravaged Europe. It would take the attack on Pearl Harbor to bring the US into WWII.

## The world was changing

In just a few short years between the wars, people saw technology jump forward in leaps and bounds. Machines like aeroplanes, which at the turn of the century were little more than a curiosity, would evolve massively in people's lifetimes to revolutionise global travel, trade and warfare.

## Mouths to feed

Aid for citizens hit hard by the Great Depression could come from many directions, not just the government. Notorious gangster Al Capone opened one of the very first soup kitchens in Chicago in 1931, feeding the masses of unemployed who were on the street desperate to find work.

## The first lady of the world

Eleanor Roosevelt, fifth cousin once removed and wife to Franklin D Roosevelt, was a formidable political figure in American politics. From her support of FDR through his illness, serving as first lady through his four terms, to her work at the UN she was not someone to live in her husband's shadow.

She had met Franklin on a train in 1902 and from there they had begun a secret correspondence that turned into a romance. Although Franklin's mother disapproved of the match the pair were married on 17 March 1905. Unfortunately it was not to be happily ever after as Franklin's affair with a secretary would force Eleanor to give him an ultimatum: end the relationship or divorce. He chose to end the relationship but the episode had shown Eleanor that she should pursue her own happiness in public life.

As a staunch supporter of civil rights she helped sway the African-American vote, that were usually pointing Republican, to become a consistent base for the Democratic Party.

After her husband's passing Eleanor became the first chairperson for the United Nations Commission of Human Rights and stayed in the position until 1947. In the 1950s she embarked on an exhaustive touring schedule both at home and abroad on behalf of the UN and the work she did there. In 1962 she passed away after a battle with a rare bone marrow disease.



Eleanor Roosevelt transcended her role as first lady to become an adept politician in her own right




Roosevelt walks with James M Cox during their failed presidential campaign of 1920

Franklin D Roosevelt was born into an old, prominent and above all rich, Dutch family in the Hudson Valley town of Hyde Park. Being tutored at home from a young age he did not interact with many other children his own age. His mother Sara was a particularly prominent influence throughout his childhood, but he was also close with his father and the family took frequent trips together to Europe.

While his schooling and higher educational years would bring him little joy he flourished as a lawyer, passing the bar exam in 1907. Becoming heavily involved in politics he served as assistant secretary of the navy under Woodrow Wilson and ran as the vice president on the Democratic ticket for the 1920 election. It was a dismal failure and the Democratic Party lost by a wide margin.

A defining factor in Roosevelt's life, and one that almost made his political aspirations come crashing down, was his battle with polio. Diagnosed from 1921 he completely lost the use of his legs and took measures to not appear in public in a wheelchair, feeling self-conscious and thinking that it would make him look weak. Although he was never able to recover the use of his legs, he did manage to walk short distances with the help of some crutches and steel braces, though that is not to say he didn't try every possible cure available to him, even going so far as to purchase Warm Springs resort in Georgia, which would later be open to other patients. While his personal efforts were unsuccessful his work would help thousands of other sufferers battle the affliction and he would also later help fund a vaccine.

> Roosevelt was the first president to make his inaugural address over the radio. Citizens from all over the country tuned in just to hear his famous speech

While still struggling with health issues FDR was convinced to make a return to politics and in 1928 he became the governor for the state of New York. From here he had a great opportunity to win the presidential election in 1932. He was inaugurated in 1933 as the 32nd president of the US.

Roosevelt is often praised for his foresight into future events, the most significant example being the rise of Nazi Germany and the danger this posed to democratic countries all over the world. As the United States had adopted



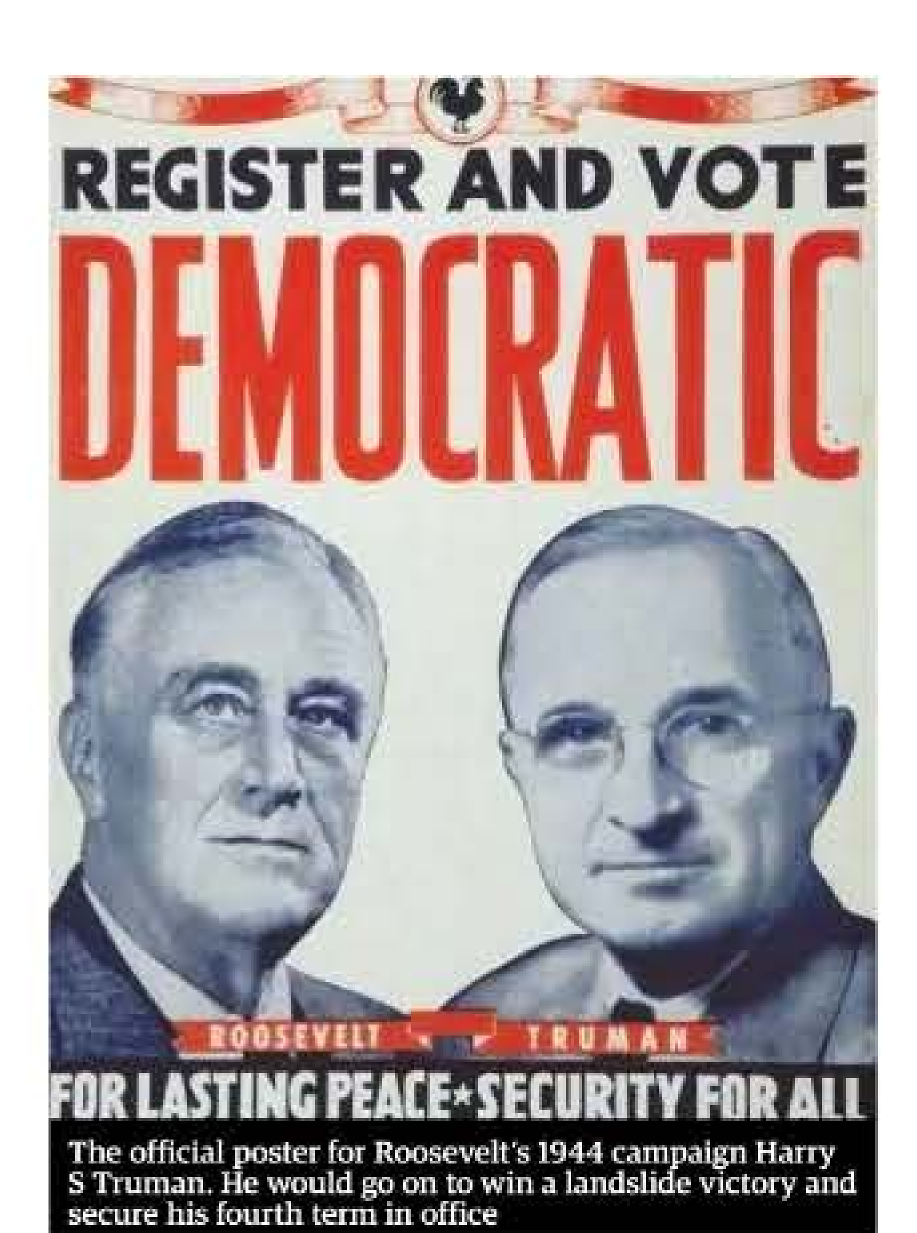
### *Defining moment*
### Diagnosed with polio
**August 1921**

It would be in Campobello Island, Canada where FDR would hear this life-changing news. Losing the use of his legs dashes his political aspirations and Roosevelt resigns himself to living the life of a patient, but Eleanor persuades him to continue on his career path. Although the many forms of treatment he would try would not return his leg function, he teaches himself to walk short distances with leg braces and a pair of crutches. For the rest of his life he would be a strong supporter of polio research and would open a treatment centre for patients at Warm Springs, Georgia.

## *Timeline*

1896

- **A rude awakening**
  After being home schooled for years FDR is sent to board at Groton School in Massachusetts. Due to this, and his privileged upbringing, he found it difficult to fit in and make friends.
  **1896**
- **Graduated Harvard University**
  Surprisingly Roosevelt did not excel while at Harvard and was by all accounts a rather average student. After taking four years of economics classes Roosevelt reportedly said "Everything I was taught was wrong".
  **24 June 1903**
- **Tying the knot**
  FDR marries his sweetheart, Eleanor Roosevelt, a niece of ex-president Theodore Roosevelt and his fifth cousin once removed. The two would have a marriage complicated by an overbearing mother and Franklin's infidelities.
  **17 March 1905**
- **Passes New York state bar examination**
  After graduating and passing the bar exam Roosevelt takes a position at Carter Ledyard & Milburn, a highly prestigious Wall Street law firm that deals mainly with corporate law cases.
  **1907**
- **Appointed assistant secretary of the Navy**
  A firm believer that the US needed a larger naval presence, Roosevelt took to this position with fervour, earning him a reputation as an energetic and hard-working Democratic man.
  **April 1913**
- **Nominated to run as vice president**
  Roosevelt is named as the Democratic vice presidential candidate alongside James M Cox, but the pair lose the 1920 election to Republicans Warren G Harding and Calvin Coolidge
  **1920**



The official poster for Roosevelt's 1944 campaign Harry S Truman. He would go on to win a landslide victory and secure his fourth term in office

## "His influence was cemented as the US established itself as a world power"

a strict isolationist policy he could not openly help the Allied powers of Europe fight against Germany without risking the wrath of Congress and the American people. He wanted to ready the country for war without going against American neutrality. In 1940, a peacetime draft called the Selective Training and Service Act was enforced. To quell rising fears from the population he promised the parents of the United States that he would not send their sons to fight in foreign wars. However when the US finally entered World War II he claimed that it didn't count as a foreign war as it encompassed the globe - this was thought to be a rather Machiavellian move by his critics.

Roosevelt also began a constant stream of correspondence with British prime minister Winston Churchill so that he was kept up to date with events across the Atlantic. Not wanting to wait to take action, he decided that the United States would be the 'Arsenal of Democracy' - if the country couldn't openly fight, it could at least supply those that did. Roosevelt achieved this goal via the lend-lease programme, in which the United States supplied aid in the form of oil, food, war planes, ships, munitions and materials with terms stating that the supplies be used until returned or destroyed. A total of $50 billion worth of cargo was shipped out of the US, mostly to Britain but also to China, France and the USSR.

This aid would have to reach Europe by ship and so began a huge operation where tons of supplies were ferried across the Atlantic. Roosevelt knew these convoys were tempting targets for prowling German U-boats, but if an American ship was attacked then it would enable him to declare war without fear of a backlash. On 7 December 1941, however, Japan bombed the American navy at Pearl Harbor. This single act immediately galvanised the public and put the whole country behind the president when war was declared the following day.

> This president was not shy to the fact that he enjoyed a drink, so much so that he is sometimes credited with popularising the dirty Martini cocktail

After 12 years in the White House, Roosevelt's influence was cemented as the US emerged from the ashes of WWII to establish itself as a world power. His foresight would come into play again as he was instrumental in the construction of the United Nations. Unfortunately he would never see it come to fruition as he died on 12 April 1945.

During his final years FDR cut a gaunt figure as his health rapidly deteriorated. He was kept from the public eye so as to not cause panic or lower morale in the war years, and so when his death came just months after the commencement of his unprecedented fourth term in office it shocked the nation.

This was a man who had taken the reigns during the Great Depression, stood up for the working man and given the country jobs, financial security and most importantly, a future. Hailed as a hero of the American people, he won the hearts of the population by promising and delivering fast and effective action time and time again.

### *Defining moment*
### Elected president of the United States
**8 November 1932**

Having a strong political base in the most populated state put Roosevelt on good footing for the presidency. In his nomination speech, he stated "This is more than a political campaign. It is a call to arms." Focusing on the citizens hit hardest by the recession, the Democratic Party found new allies in the workers' unions, minority groups and the more impoverished US citizens. With this charged electorit Roosevelt went on to win in all but six states and with 57 per cent of the vote, making him the 32nd president of the United States.


Roosevelt rides with outgoing president Herbert Hoover on the day of his inauguration in 1933

### *Defining moment*
### A date that will live in infamy
**7 December 1941**

With the surprise attack on the US naval base of Pearl Harbor by the Empire of Japan, the United States loses interest in its isolationist policy and rallies behind its president. Having already signed the lend-lease to other allied countries, the US had forgone its neutrality with entering into army conflict. The unprovoked attack on US sovereignty, however, could not be ignored and whatever dealings that Roosevelt had previously been making under the table were no longer necessary. The United States were now fully committed to the war effort and it would be four costly years until the hostilities would cease.

**Elected governor of New York state**
Roosevelt sets out as a reform governor and establishes new social policies. Some of these prove unpopular as a bomb was found addressed to him but was defused before it went off.
**4 November 1928**

**Champions the 'First Hundred Days' programme**
By closing the banks on a special 'bank holiday' and convening Congress to pass the Emergency Banking Act, FDR helps to stabilise the recession and restore some measure of public trust.
**5 March 1933**

**Re-elected for a Second Term**
Buoyed by his successes and public support Roosevelt smashes the election with 60 per cent of the vote and carries all but two states: Vermont and Maine.
**3 November 1936**

**Astoundingly re-elected for a third term**
At the time, presidents serving for two terms was an unwritten rule so to run for a third was a great risk. Roosevelt says he will only run if he has the backing of the party. "We want Roosevelt... the world wants Roosevelt" was the reply.
**5 November 1940**

**Successfully re-elected for a fourth term**
With WWII raging the American people once again choose the leader who has seen them through some of the darkest times in US history, with the knowledge that he would continue to do so.
**7 November 1944**

1945

**A death that shook the nation**
The death of Franklin D Roosevelt is felt both at home and abroad. It rocks the country to its very foundation and a great sense of loss is felt by every American.
**12 April 1945**



1945 – 1953

# Harry S Truman

## The only president to have used atomic weapons in war, Truman oversaw radical changes in the post-war US and faced down the Soviet Union

President Franklin D Roosevelt was always going to be a tough act to follow. Harry Truman was at house speaker Sam Rayburn's office when came the phone call instructing him to "come quickly and quietly" at just after 5pm Eastern War Time on 12 April 1945.

Upon being told of the president's death by his wife Eleanor, Truman asked her if there was anything he could do for her.

"Is there anything we can do for you?" replied the first lady incredulously. "You are the one who is in trouble now."

At 7pm a group gathered in the cabinet room at the White House for the swearing in of Truman that included his wife Bess and daughter Margaret. Three hours and 14 minutes after the death of FDR, the former vice president placed his hand on the Bible and recited the oath of office.

"The whole weight of the Moon and stars fell on me," he later told the press.

He had come a long way from his birthplace of Lamar, Missouri, a bookish boy whose father had gone broke trading in wheat futures in 1901 and later moved the family to Independence to further his son's education.

'Mama' Martha Ellen Truman had used the family Bible to teach young Harry to read. By the time he was twelve, he had read the entire Bible and all of Mark Twain twice. He also showed promise as a player of classical piano.

At 16 Harry was living with railroad labour gangs and two years later he was working as a Kansas City bank clerk. He returned to run the family farm in 1906, taking over full-time in 1917.

That same year he embarked for the war in Europe with General John J Pershing's expeditionary force. Elected a first lieutenant in the National Guard, he transformed the ill-disciplined Battery D 129th Field Artillery, 60th Brigade, 35th Infantry Division into one of the most effective units in the army. Lieutenant Truman's men knocked out a German battery during the Muese-Argonne offensive of 1918.

Truman married Bess Wallace at the age of 35. She was the daughter of one of the wealthiest families in Independence, Missouri

Truman had also saved a son of one of the Pendergast brothers from an Army court martial. Tom and Mike Pendergast controlled Kansas and much of Missouri's Democrat machine.

Following an unsuccessful stint as a haberdasher, their influence secured Truman the chance to run for a court judgeship. By the time he became Senator from Missouri, however, Truman faced sneers that he was the 'Senator from Pendergast.'

Truman made his name investigating wartime production, exposing waste and the production of faulty steel. By 1944, he was embroiled in the factional rivalry of the Democratic national convention's vice presidential nomination. For the liberal-left, the obvious choice was the vice president Henry Wallace. Others backed either the war mobilisation director James F Byrnes or Supreme Court Justice William O Douglas, both of

33

**HARRY S TRUMAN**
**Democrat, 1884 - 1972**

*Brief Bio*

Harry S Truman unexpectedly became president upon the death of FDR in April 1945. A bookish farm boy from Missouri who had fought in World War I, he had served as a Missouri senator. His administration began on the eve of the Axis defeat in World War II and ended with the United States committed to a global conflict with communism known as the Cold War.



United States forces at war with their communist counterparts in Korea, 1951

# Life in the time of Harry S Truman

## Civil rights

Despite Truman's background, he realised that his predecessor had dragged his feet on civil rights. He appointed a civil rights commission and later legislation provoked a revolt at the 1948 Democratic national convention as 'Dixiecrats' rallied around the governor of South Carolina J Strom Thurmond, a noted conservative and critic of Truman.

## Living standards

The Truman years were characterised by unprecedented affluence: the national output of 1946 would double within a decade. By 1951 a typical American family ate two and half tons of food: the American child in 1950 was two and a half inches taller than his predecessor in 1900.

## Hollywood and HUAC

When the House of Un-American Activities went on the warpath in October 1947, determined to stamp out supposed communist subversion in Hollywood, they could rely on the help of reactionary studio bosses such as Jack Warner, Louis B Mayer and Walt Disney to name names.

## Workers and bosses

Industrial conflict, dormant in the war years, now reignited. A steel strike in January 1946 brought 800,000 workers out and was followed by a coal strike in April and a rail strike in May. Coupled with inflation, strikes contributed to the Democratic mauling in the 1946 midterm elections.

## Ex-soldiers

Hundreds of thousands of servicemen returned home to start families: the post-war 'baby boom' would have profound economic and sociological consequences in the coming decades. Truman also wanted to follow up FDR's New Deal with a package of employment, health, education and insurance reforms called the 'Fair Deal' in the face of fierce Republican opposition.

## The atomic bombings

The decision to unleash the atomic bomb against imperial Japan has always been Truman's most controversial policy decision: the blasts at Hiroshima and Nagasaki killed at least 130,000 Japanese civilians and left an enduring legacy of radioactive contamination. It has been argued that Truman's only alternative to using the atomic bomb would have been a brutal island-by-island invasion of Japan, costing hundreds of thousands of young American lives as millions of fanatical subjects rallied to the emperor. But by spring of 1945, Japan was cut off from South East Asia's oil supplies, its fleets crippled, its seas and skies open to attack and the air force resorting to desperate kamikaze suicide attacks. Declassified documents now indicate that Truman and his advisors had estimated a combined siege and naval blockade together with non-atomic bombings had at least a chance of forcing a Japanese surrender before November, and the proposed commencement of Operation Olympic, the invasion of Kyushu. But other declassified documents now reveal that Stalin, in violation of the Yalta Agreements, wanted his rapidly advancing forces to occupy Hokkaido. Moreover the Red Army did not stop advancing until the official Japanese surrender on 2 September and already controlled large parts of Manchuria and Korea. The atomic bombings almost certainly represented less the end of WWII as the beginning of the Cold War, the ultimate gesture of US military might designed to unnerve the Soviets.


The atomic mushroom cloud rises over Hiroshima in August 1945

whom FDR had endorsed. The president himself came to favour Truman after being warned by his advisors that the latter would alienate organised labour and African Americans.

Truman demurred at first. On 19 July he was called to a meeting of party bosses where he overheard FDR's voice from the telephone saying: "Well you tell the senator that if he wants to break up the Democratic Party in the middle of a war that's his responsibility."

Truman would serve only 82 days as vice president. The two men were never close.

Initially, Truman was overshadowed by Roosevelt, lacking his charisma and public speaking skills. However, the American public considered him straight-talking, feisty and honest, characteristics that played to his advantage during the 1948 Presidential election.

Truman oversaw the conversion of the American economy from wartime production to one that emphasised consumerism. He protected the New Deal with a rise in the minimum wage in 1949 and an expansion of social security. He did not roll back many of FDR's wartime interventions in the economy, which had included state monopolies, wage and price controls.

However, the immediate post-war economy was hobbled by high inflation and the shortage of many consumer goods such as cars, housing, refrigerators, sugar and meat. This was also an era of massive industrial unrest: a record 4.6 million workers, one in ten of the labour force, went on strike in 1946.

During the Truman presidency, the military was desegregated and a federal report on civil rights was commissioned. His administration was harried by the Republicans, especially after they captured Congress in the 1946 mid-term elections.

The Democratic Party was challenged by more factionalism, at least during Truman's first term.

The former FDR vice president, later secretary of commerce, Henry Wallace, launched the left-wing Progressive Party in December 1947. Truman also faced a 'Dixiecrat' revolt in the south over his attempts to extend civil rights.

> The popular 1948 election cry: 'Give 'em hell Harry!' was met with the riposte "I never give anybody hell. I just tell the truth and they think it's hell"

Hostility to communism was rife within the political culture of the late 1940s: the 1946 mid-term election brought such young Red-baiting firebrands as Joseph McCarthy (Wisconsin) and Richard Nixon (California) to public attention.

Rooting out the supposed web of covert spies and saboteurs in the pay of Moscow even reached as far as Hollywood (life and times) where the future president, Ronald Reagan, as president of the Screen Actors' Guild, was an enthusiastic scourge of big screen leftism.

Cleansing American entertainment of alleged communist influence was often a vindictive and paranoid business: many Americans 'blacklisted' by the House of Un-American Activities (HUAC) often had their careers ruined over little more than innuendo and their association with others. Truman and his secretary of state Dean Acheson were likewise accused by conservative Republicans like Nixon of being 'soft' on communism, to their detriment.

To the anger of many conservatives, Acheson had said he stood by Alger Hiss, a State Department official, after his 1950 perjury conviction. Hiss had been named by the senior Time magazine editor Whittaker Chambers as a Soviet spy when the latter testified before HUAC in August 1948.

But the fear of espionage was not a baseless one during the Truman era. Newly installed as president, Truman had taken Stalin aside at Potsdam on 24

### Defining moment
### Foreign Assistance Act signed
**1948**

The devastation of World War II had left Europe's economies in ruins, with millions facing starvation. The European Recovery Program, aka the Marshall Plan, was proposed by Truman's secretary of state, George Marshall. In April 1948 freighter John H Quick sailed from Galveston Texas with 9,000 tonnes of wheat. Hundreds of vessels containing essential raw materials and foodstuffs would follow. In 1949 America gave or leant 2.4 per cent of its gross national product. The plan worked. By 1951, the penultimate year of the program, West Europe's industrial production was 43 per cent above prewar levels.

## Timeline

1884

**Born in Missouri**
Harry is born in Lamar, Missouri, though the Truman family later moves to Independence when he is six. He meets his future wife Bess Wallace at the First Presbyterian Sunday School there.
**8 May 1884**

**Becomes a presiding judge**
Truman is sworn in and serves two four-year terms in Jackson County Court. He becomes the senator from Missouri in 1934, beating his Republican rival Roscoe C Patterson by 262,000 votes.
**January 1927**

**Announces VE Day**
Germany surrenders to the Allied forces on 7 May 1945. Truman announces the surrender to the American public by radio one day later, a little under a month after FDR's death made him 33rd president.
**8 May 1945**

**Truman meets Stalin**
Truman and Stalin meet for the first time at Potsdam and Truman judges Stalin as "honest but smart as hell." Years later he would admit he had been an "innocent idealist" in the company of Stalin who privately mocked him.
**17 July 1945**

**Bombing of Hiroshima**
Truman announces the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima by the US Air Force B-29 bomber Enola Gay. Nagasaki is bombed three days later, with the two bombings killing at least 130,000 Japanese civilians.
**6 August 1945**

**Truman Doctrine announced**
Truman requests an appropriation of $400 million before a joint session of Congress in order to defeat communism in Greece and Turkey. The Truman Doctrine was passed and received the support of most Republicans.
**12 March 1947**


Truman with Churchill and Stalin at Potsdam

July 1945 and whispered that the United States was preparing a new secret weapon against the Japanese. But Stalin already knew about the atom bomb, thanks to the British spies Klaus Fuchs and Donald McClean.

The 1951 trial and subsequent execution of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg for passing atomic secrets to the Soviets outraged many liberals. But declassified Soviet cables decades later revealed Julius to have been a Soviet courier.

Truman's foreign policy, however, was defined by its opposition to Soviet communism. He had taken power only a few weeks before the suicide of Adolf Hitler. By the end of his administration, the United Nations, led by American forces, was locked into a stalemated war against communist forces on the remote Korean peninsula.

During Truman's first term the Allies accepted the unconditional surrender of the Axis powers and the United Nations Charter was signed. In 1947 he introduced the Truman Doctrine to provide aid to Greece and Turkey, seeking to prevent them from becoming Soviet supplicants.

That same year, Truman instituted the Marshall Plan (see timeline) to rescue Europe's war-wrecked economies. By 1948, he had recognised the State of Israel and that June he initiated an airlift of food and supplies to Western-held areas of Berlin after Soviet forces blocked access.

In 1949 Truman supported the establishment of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), an ultimately nuclear-armed military alliance against the Soviet Union and its East European satellites.

If the Cold War lived up to its billing in Europe, the Far East proved to be a region of far more volatile superpower rivalry.

After China's civil war reignited following the Japanese defeat, the Truman administration had backed Chiang Kai Shek's corrupt and incompetent Nationalists against the communist guerrillas led by Chairman Mao Zedong.

When the latter prevailed in 1949, the controversy over 'Who lost China?' became a cause celebre for anti-communist Republicans over the following years.

Moreover, Truman's handling of the war in Korea (see below) dogged his final years. The conduct of General MacArthur on the battlefield during the winter of 1950-51 constituted arguably the most serious act of insubordination against an American commander-in-chief in American history. Repeatedly critical of the administration in press statements, MacArthur was determined to take the war into China itself, overthrowing Mao's communist regime. He would later reveal in his memoirs that he wanted to use a total of 26 atomic bombs against North Korea and China.

> In January 1949, Truman's inauguration was the first in American history to be nationally televised

Even so, MacArthur's dismissal by Truman, although well within the presidential prerogative, was highly unpopular. Returning to the United States, MacArthur later made a 34-minute address to a joint session of Congress, condemned by Truman as "nothing but a bunch of damn bullshit." But seven million Americans cheered MacArthur's ticker tape parade through New York in April 1951.

Truman was frustrated by the costly war, which ultimately killed 35,000 American soldiers and nearly two million Koreans. Once again his approval ratings plummeted.

He left office in January 1953 and in the following years, travelled extensively, publishing his memoirs in a collection titled *Mr Citizen* in 1960.

By the time of his death twelve years later, it was widely recognised that his administration had profoundly changed the United States and the wider world.

## *Defining moment*

### Truman re-elected for second term despite predicted defeat
**1948**

A jubilant Truman held up a copy of the Chicago Tribune where a strike had forced the paper to go to press early with 'Dewey Defeats Truman' on its front page. Truman's 1948 election victory was one of the great surprises in American political history. Thomas E Dewey made a very credible Republican candidate: as a special prosecutor in New York he had gone after some of the most notorious gangsters of the Prohibition era. Dewey later served as a district attorney and Governor of New York. In the latter capacity he had cleared slums, reformed mental hospitals, built new clinics, extended the state infrastructure but was still able to cut the state's tax rates by 50 per cent. Moreover by 1948, Truman's rating were at an abysmal 32 per cent, kept low by rising inflation, industrial unrest and persistent shortages of certain consumer items. "To err is Truman" became a popular jibe before the campaign.

## *Defining moment*

### US air and sea forces aid South Korea against the communist threat
**1950**

The defeat of imperial Japan had left the Korean peninsula partitioned along the 38th parallel of latitude into a Soviet backed North and US-backed South by mid 1948. In June 1950, with the tacit backing of Joseph Stalin, North Korea's Kim Il-sung sent his armies storming over the 38th parallel. "By God I am going to let them have it," vowed Truman as a UN task force was assembled under the supreme command of General Douglas MacArthur; 16 other nations provided fighting forces to expel the communists from South Korea. For the first twelve months the battlefront ranged from either end of the peninsula. The UN held on to the south eastern Pusan perimeter but following a risky amphibious landing at the port of Inchon, MacArthur's forces pushed the North Koreans towards the River Yalu and the Chinese border. Then, as the freezing winter broke, Chairman Mao Zedong sent 300,000 'volunteers' over the Yalu, attacking UN forces and pushing the frontline below the South Korean capital of Seoul. The war settled into two years of attrition before an armistice was signed in the village of Panmunjom in July 1953.

**Aid for Europe**
Truman asks for $17 billion in grants and loans over four years for the European Recovery Program, aka the Marshall Plan. This strategy depended on bipartisan support in an ideologically polarised era.
**June 1947**

**Civil rights program**
Without prior consultation, Truman calls on Congress to enact an anti-lynching law and legislation to prohibit segregation on interstate trains, buses, planes and in the military. This move angers many southern Democrats.
**2 February 1948**

**Cold War in Europe**
Truman proclaims the North Atlantic Pact which had been signed by 12 nations in Washington in April. The pact was entrusted to a new organisation – the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO).
**24 August 1949**

**MacArthur is dismissed**
The supreme commander of the UN task force in Korea is informed by brown envelope of his dismissal while at his residence in Tokyo. He is shortly replaced on the ground by Lt General Matthew Ridgway.
**11 April 1951**

**Eisenhower takes over**
Truman attends the inauguration of Dwight D Eisenhower, who had previously worked for Truman at NATO and whose campaign had been strongly critical of the outgoing president's record on Korea and domestic corruption scandals.
**20 January 1953**

1972

**Dies in Missouri**
Truman is 88 when he dies. By this time he had instituted a presidential library and published his memoirs during his retirement. In 1960 he had campaigned successfully for John F Kennedy. His wife Bess died in 1982 at the age of 97.
**26 December 1972**



Eisenhower made a deal with his brother to work two jobs so as to pay him through college. Edgar would then return the favour

34

DWIGHT D EISENHOWER

Republican, 1890 - 1969

Brief Bio

For much of his life Dwight D Eisenhower would help shape US foreign and military policy. Before serving as president he acted as US Army chief of staff and supreme allied commander of NATO. Not many people can claim to have had more influence on world events in the 20th century than President 'Ike'.

*1953 – 1961*

# Dwight D Eisenhower

## The 34th president oversaw a period of great growth for America while trying to steer the country away from another world conflict

A famed general and post-war leader, Dwight, or 'Ike', D Eisenhower is considered to be one of the greatest presidents in the history of the United States. In his time in the army he oversaw some of the most pivotal operations of WWII, such as the allied landings in northern France of Operation Overlord. The West Point graduate would work hard throughout his life to reach that point. Moving from Texas to Kansas when he was very young Dwight enjoyed an active childhood where he would take great pleasure in sports such as baseball and American Football. Upon gaining entry into West Point in 1911 Eisenhower was set on the path that would lead to greatness. Enjoying the military tradition and active lifestyle he would graduate a 2nd lieutenant in 1915 and would spend WWI training tank crews, which would earn him a reputation for his excellent organisational skills. Still bitter that he did not get to see combat, Eisenhower continued to climb steadily through the ranks in the interwar period, even when tragedy struck in 1921 and his son, Doud Dwight, died of scarlet fever.

Serving under another great WWII general, Douglas MacArthur, Eisenhower would be a brigadier general when the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor struck.

The war would be the proving ground of Eisenhower. He demonstrated great ability in planning Operation Torch, the allied invasion of North Africa, and commanding allied forces in Operation Overlord, including the D-Day landings that allowed the allies to gain a beachhead in northern France. Recognised as a great military mind Eisenhower was made the military governor of the US occupied zone in Germany after the war. Here he would help to rebuild Germany, which was still reeling from the terrible destruction.

A pivotal moment for Eisenhower came when, in the years just after WWII, he realised that there could be no long term cooperation between the US and the Soviet Union. Plans for peaceful cohabitation gave way to a containment policy that would check Soviet expansion.

While coming to this realisation Eisenhower would be encouraged by President Truman and others to run in the 1948 elections. Although he declined and stated that as a lifelong professional soldier he should abstain from gaining high political office, this would be the first step towards becoming the country's 34th president. Accepting the presidency of Columbia University and later the post of supreme allied commander of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) Eisenhower was able to make his voice and opinions heard about the difficulties and supremacy of US democracy, and where it stood on the world stage. He was again pressured to run in the presidential election by president Truman and finally relented. In 1952 he won the election by a landslide with the simple but effective slogan, 'I like Ike'. During his presidency he would continue the domestic policy of Roosevelt's New Deal, while his foreign policy would aim to reduce Cold War tensions with Russia through military negotiation.

This was met with mixed success, as although he was able to reach breakthroughs like the orchestration of a ceasefire on the Korean border, incidents like those involving the U2 spy plane would prove extremely embarrassing. In 1960 an American U2 spy plane operated by the CIA was shot down over Russia during an intelligence gathering mission. The Russians broadcast to the world what they had done, pointing the finger straight at America. Uncomfortable with admitting the truth America claimed the craft was intended for weather research and that it had accidentally flown over Soviet airspace. This as all before Russia announced that they had the pilot, alive and well, from the crashed plane in custody. No longer being able to deny the accusations the Americans were embarrassed on the world stage, a tough blow for any president's leadership.

Not all of Ike's presidential landmarks were purely military-based, however. His 'Atoms for Peace' speech at the UN in 1953 had far-reaching consequences for both civil and military life. Delivered to the UN general assembly this speech was a landmark in politics as it brought atomic development from secretive government research labs into the public eye. This new language of atomic warfare, with its terrible destructive power, placed grave responsibility on the countries involved in the development of these weapons. Eisenhower had been against the use of the atomic bomb on Japan in 1945, but this did not stop his administration raising the number of nuclear warheads the US possessed from 1000 to 20,000 during his time at the White House. Some good did come out of the speech though: allied countries that did not previously have access to nuclear power now had the expertise of American scientists, and this powerful new branch of science was better understood all over the world.

A childhood accident in which his brother lost an eye had a profound effect on young Ike. It taught him to be protective of those under him

Upon reaching the end of his second term, Eisenhower retreated from political life and with his wife, known as Mamie, would retire to a farm in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Admitted to hospital on 28 March 1969 Eisenhower passed away from congestive heart failure. Speaking of Eisenhower, then-president Richard Nixon would say, "Some men are considered great because they lead great armies or they lead powerful nations. For eight years now, Dwight Eisenhower has neither commanded an army nor led a nation; and yet he remained through his final days the world's most admired and respected man, truly the first citizen of the world."

## The Space Race begins

Eisenhower and the CIA had known that the USSR had the capability to launch an object into space nine months before Sputnik was to break the atmosphere. Not only did this bring the USSR great prestige it also made it clear that space was fair game to any nation that wished to claim it. With his administration's blessing, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) was founded and funding for other scientific programs was granted. Eisenhower was sceptical of the space program however, and was quoted as saying: "Anyone who would spend $40 billion in a race to the moon for national prestige is nuts."





Eisenhower gives a speech to American troops on 5 June 1944, the day before the D-Day invasion

## Life in the time of Dwight D Eisenhower

### Two more stars for the flag

In 1959 the US would bring Alaska and Hawaii into the fold by making them the 49th and 50th states respectively to join the United States. Alaska was welcomed for the oil revenue that it would bring to the country and Hawaii was instituted by popular demand. These would be the last US territories to be made into states.

### Reach for the stars

In 1957 you could be forgiven in thinking that you were living in a science fiction story. The Russians had just fired the first artificial satellite ever into earth's orbit with Sputnik. This space age technology would begin the space race that would end with the United States landing men on the moon for the first time in history.

### Foot stompin' music

With artists like Elvis Presley, Chuck Berry and Little Richard blazing the trail, a brand new sound would take 1950s America by storm. Heavily influenced by the blues, jazz and gospel music, rock and roll would come to be associated with teenage rebellion and helped influence the music we hear today.

### Come on Barbie let's go party

In 1959 toy manufacturer Mattel would launch one of the world's most iconic brands, the Barbie doll. Quickly becoming a fashion icon, Barbie would captivate America's young children for more than 50 years. Despite being at the heart of many controversies it has remained a US household name.

### Watching the stories

We can't imagine a world where TV sitcoms don't exist but in the 1950s they were a revelation. Shows like *Father Knows Best*, *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet*, and *I Love Lucy* captivated audiences across the country. Running from 1951-57, *I Love Lucy* was one of the most watched shows in the United States.

1961 – 1963

# John F Kennedy

## An iconic leader whose time in office was fraught with Cold War tension, 'JFK' remains a fascinating figure years after his untimely death



35

JOHN F KENNEDY

**Democrat, 1917 - 1963**

**Brief Bio**

John 'Jack' F Kennedy was born into a rich Irish-American Catholic family from Brookline, Massachusetts. He served in the Navy during World War II, commanding a patrol boat in the Pacific that was destroyed by enemy fire. He married Jackie Bouvier, a rich and well-established Catholic socialite in 1953, and ascended to the presidency in 1961. He would only serve two years of his term before he was assassinated in 1963.

Election night, Tuesday 8 November 1960. John 'Jack' Fitzgerald Kennedy waited for the voting results to come through on the television, his family sat around him in the living room of his brother's home in Hyannis Port, Massachusetts. The endless television interviews, broadcast debates, rallies and travelling had taken their toll on his health, he hadn't had a proper meal or a good night's sleep in two weeks, and now he was beyond exhausted. The endless lectures from his father, Joe, about image and how it didn't matter who you were, only what people thought you were, had started to grate on him. Even his wife Jackie, normally a source of comfort, was starting to unsettle him - when more favourable results came in and she said, "Oh bunny, you're president now!" he quickly turned his head away from the television screen and looked at her with his tired eyes, replying "No... no, it's too early yet".

After winning the industrial cities of the Northeast, doubt filled the cramped living room when the loss of the Midwest and the Rocky Mountain states came through on the broadcast. His opponent, Richard Nixon, was more experienced, had more supporters in the all-important south, and had been endorsed by the current president, war hero Dwight Eisenhower. He was the safe vote, while Kennedy was the young, energetic pretender. Kennedy could only hope and pray that he had done enough.

After the "longest night in history," as Jackie would later describe it, the call came in the following morning. Nixon had admitted defeat and sent a congratulatory telegram to Kennedy. It was one of the closet elections in American history; the final tally being 34,227,096 to 34,107,646 of the popular vote, with 303 to 219 of the electoral vote going to the young pretender. The bare facts say it was hardly a ringing endorsement of Kennedy, but given the experience and relative popularity of Nixon, it was a spectacular victory. Against the advice of his closet supporters, Kennedy visited Nixon in Florida on 14 November. Kennedy wasn't impressed. He silently listened to Nixon dominate what was meant to be a friendly conversation about the last few months, and wondered how a man like this had nearly won the presidency. As he clambered back onto his helicopter after it was over, he turned to an aide and said, "It was just as well for all of us he didn't quite make it!"

Kennedy's presidency would go down in history as the dawn of a new era. He changed the face of politics by courting the media and creating his very own cult of celebrity, inspiring hope through his charm and freedom through his liberal policies. He gave the US a renewed self-confidence through his tough reputation abroad, and after his brutal assassination in Dallas his legacy would live on.

At the start of Kennedy's long fight for Democratic nomination in 1957, a reporter said that Kennedy was Washington's 'hottest tourist attraction'. It was widely rumoured he had an 'in' in *Life* magazine because of all the positive press he received there, and the *American Mercury* hailed him as the "perfect politician". Others were less convinced. "He'll never make it with that haircut," commented a prominent politician from New York.

It was true that Kennedy had his critics, but it was his deep connection with the media, getting his name in the public domain and making sure that through his family connections it stayed out there in the best possible light, that made his political campaigns in the Fifties a success. The media was enamoured with his good looks,






Watching The America's Cup race



## "One of my sons will be president"

Joe Kennedy famously made the above claim about his sons. He was a man who expected a lot from his family – after all, they were Kennedys, and thus destined for greatness. Born in 1888, Joe grew up in a well-established Catholic family from Boston. He worked in Hollywood as a film producer and then entered politics as part of the Franklin Roosevelt administration. He later became ambassador to Britain, famously saying the country was "finished" in 1940. He was renowned for his political connections, using them to see his children established among the elite of American society after the war. It was also rumoured that he had unofficial connections with the Mafia, using them as he used everyone else: to get more power and influence. He was a domineering and harsh father, especially when his family didn't meet his high standards, and infamously had his daughter Rosemary lobotomised because of her violent personality. He also 'vetted' husbands for his daughters, ensuring they all married into families that would benefit the family. His affairs with other women were legendary, estranging him from his wife, Rose. He was a pessimist and isolationist, weighed down with old prejudices of the Protestant-dominated middle class. Jack was none of these things, outgrowing Joe's outdated beliefs.

beautiful wife and young family. He represented the American dream, descended from Irish immigrants and doing well through America's bounty to become a senator in the most powerful country in the world. He was the equivalent of an A-list celebrity on Capitol Hill, and he didn't mind the status, as he himself remarked, "This publicity does one good thing: it takes the Vice out of Vice-President." This wasn't to say that he was a shallow man who simply enjoyed the press for his own vanity; the press shots of him and Jackie with their children in Hyannis Port may have been doctored to fit the idyll of the perfect American family, but they do portray a genuine sentiment of love.

One of the most compelling stories that illustrates his character was not caught on camera, however. During his tenure in office, an aide was showing a group of disabled children around the White House when their wheelchairs prevented them from joining the rest of the tour group. Kennedy, late for a meeting, spotted them and came over to the children. The aide recalled: "He crossed the lawn to us, insisted on being introduced to each child and either picked up each limp, paralysed hand to shake it, or touched the child on the cheek. He had a different conversation with each child... the child's face radiated a joy totally impossible to describe." Kennedy's natural charm was rooted in compassion – something that the press could project, but not create.

The power over the press he possessed even allowed him to overcome the prejudices that some sections of American society held against him due to his Catholic upbringing; one writer remarked, "The stereotype of the Irish Catholic politician, the pugnacious, priest-ridden representative of an embittered, embattled minority, simply does not fit the poised, urbane, cosmopolitan young socialite from Harvard." This assertion was put to the test when he was nominated as the Democratic candidate for the presidency. Kennedy would need more than his easy smile, good looks and friends in the print media, as these alone would not be enough to go up against a seasoned politician like Nixon; he would need something that would allow him to reach millions and captivate them with his personality. He needed the power of television.

Kennedy's time would come during the first live television debates in September 1960, a contest that was watched by over 60 million people. Kennedy had taken a tour of the television studio beforehand, where his aides had worked out how the lighting, sound and shooting angles would benefit him; everything would have to be perfect if

> "The media was enamoured with his good looks, beautiful wife and family"

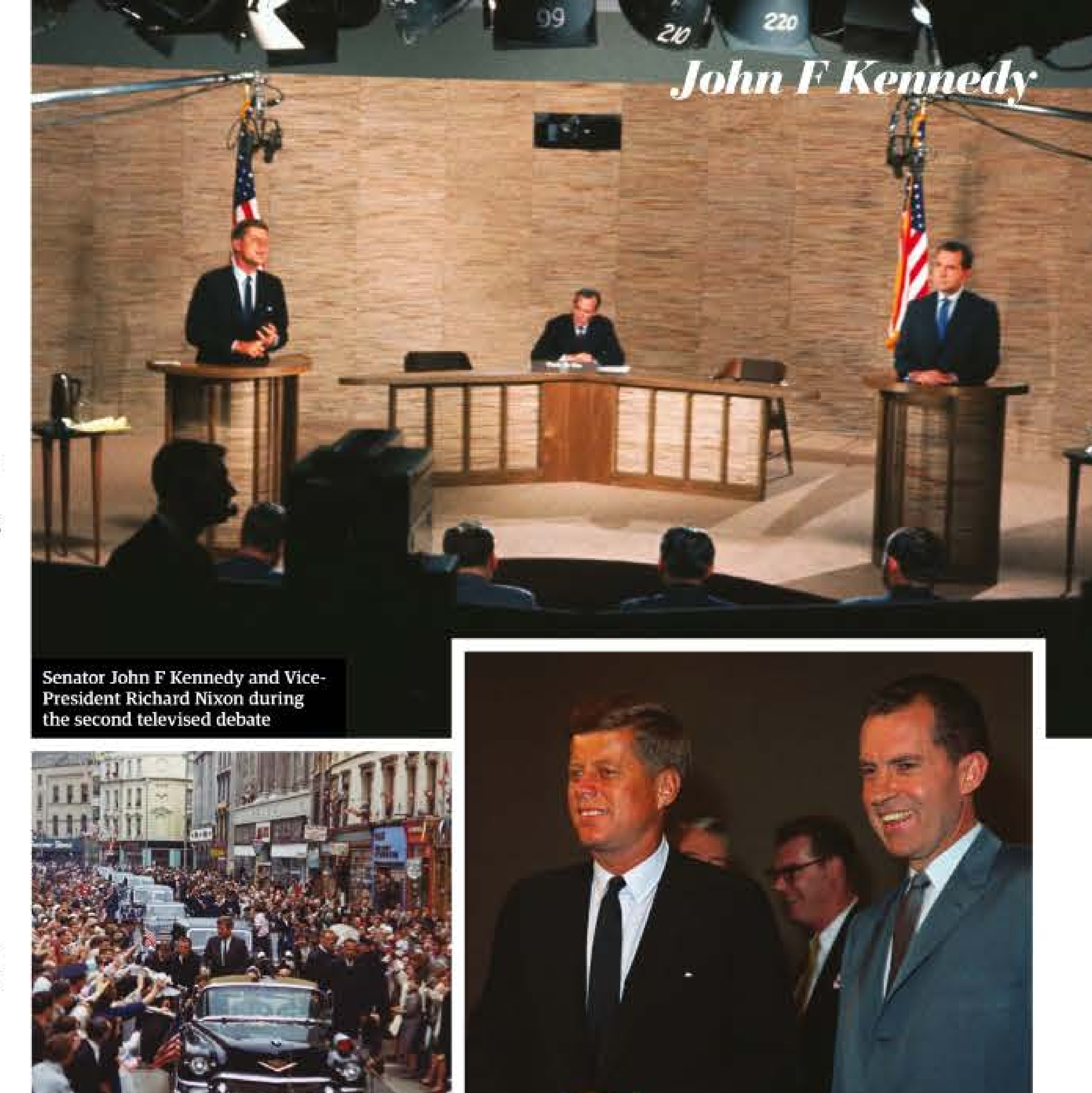

JFK: President, statesman and American hero

he was to shine on the box. Both candidates were offered the services of a CBS make-up artist – not that Kennedy needed it, as his skin looked tanned and healthy after campaigning in California. Nixon, on the other hand, looked pasty and sweaty, having only just recovered from a knee injury, but declined the make-up services. Ultimately, he got one of his aides to apply some make-up on minutes before the broadcast to cover up his stubble, but coupled with his pale complexion, it only made him look ill and dirty. Kennedy received coaching from consultants to allow him to practice rebuking Nixon's comment while maintaining eye contact with the audience straight down the lens.

Nixon was confident he could wing it, with one commentator noting afterwards that, "Nixon was addressing himself to Kennedy – but Kennedy was addressing himself to the audience that was the nation." Kennedy chose a suit that contrasted well with the background of the set, while Nixon's blended horribly into the backdrop. Kennedy was prepared and ready; Nixon looked nervous and tired. The result was a popular victory for Kennedy, with one newspaper editor commenting, "The [television] medium is good to Kennedy and most unkind to Nixon. It makes Kennedy look forceful. It makes Nixon look guilty." Emphasising the differences in perception television offered, the majority of those who heard the radio debate thought Nixon had won, while those who watched on television were inclined in favour of Kennedy.

Kennedy was the first presidential candidate to properly utilise the power of the media and the idea of looking 'right' to connect with audiences through the medium of television, and it paid out in dividends. Subsequent presidents and their PR teams would never forget it. To this day, the presidential debates are given the highest priority, with PR consultants spending hours coaching and teaching respective nominees when to smile, when to laugh and how to look, even down to the shoes and ties they're wearing. It was Kennedy's stunning victory and his associations with the press before and after the 1960 election that subsequent presidential campaigns modelled themselves on. The image of the man who would lead the American people was now just as important as the man's politics. But of course, looking right was only part of the story; Kennedy had to have the right policies to fully tap into the pool of voters. As influential columnist William V Shannon wrote, "Month after month, from the glossy pages of *Life* to the multicoloured cover of *Redbook*, Jack and Jackie Kennedy smile out at millions of readers; he with his tousled hair and winning smile, she with her dark eyes and beautiful face... But what has all this to with statesmanship?" Ostensibly, the answer could be found in his hard-nosed Cold War rhetoric, but there was another issue burning through America in the Sixties that Kennedy could not afford to ignore: the fight for civil rights.

By 1960, the civil rights movement under Martin Luther King Jr was worrying the southern states, who were holding firm on segregation and humiliating the political community in America as a whole in the process. How on earth could a country that claimed to be the leader of the



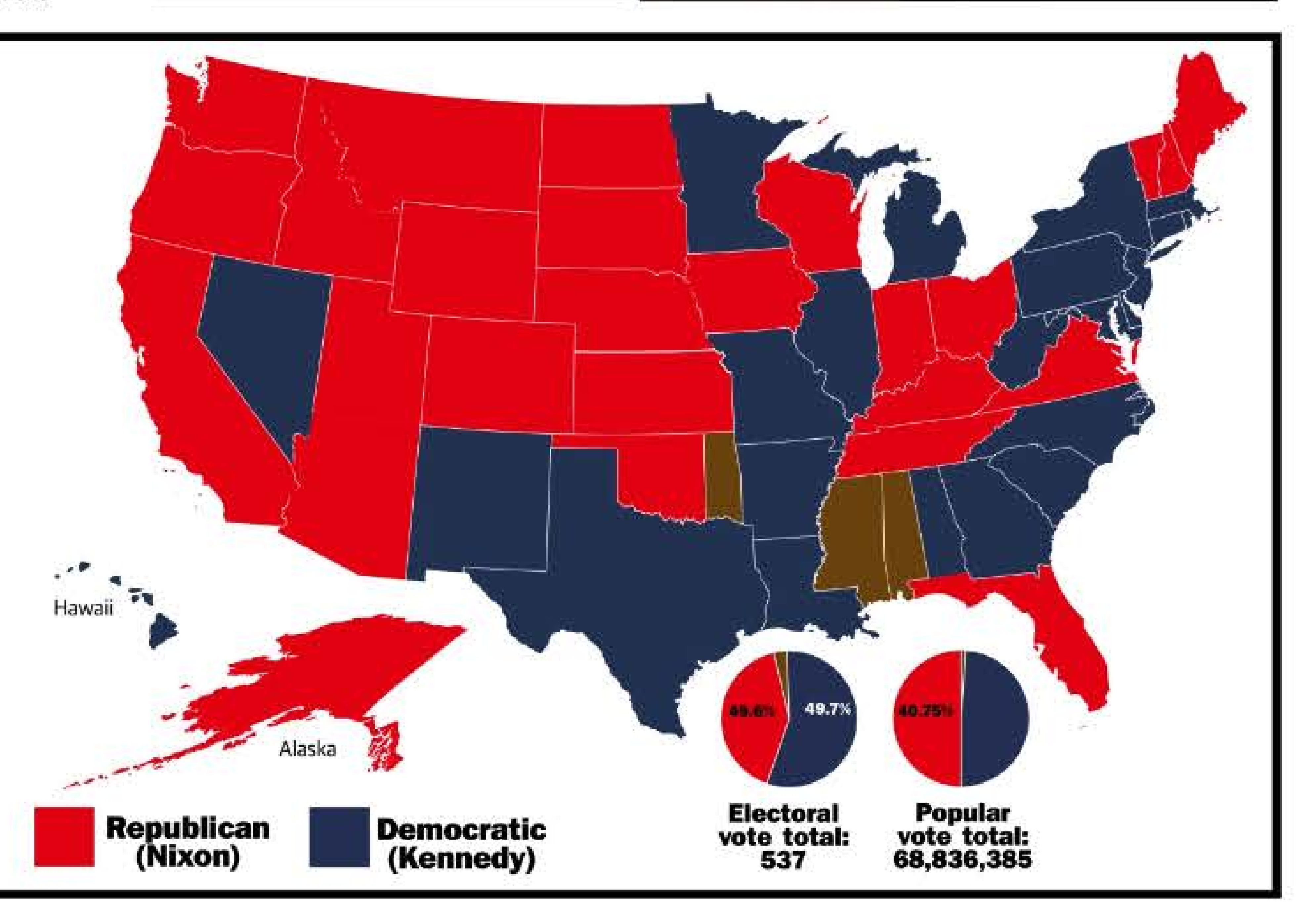
Senator John F Kennedy and Vice-President Richard Nixon during the second televised debate

Spectators line the streets of Ireland to catch a glimpse of Kennedy

Presidential nominees Kennedy and Nixon smiling for the cameras prior to their first televised debate

## How America was won

The presidential election of 1960 was one of the closest in American history. Richard Nixon, Kennedy's opponent, was able to gain significant control over the American Midwest, a traditional Republican stronghold, and in California and Florida, which carried with it a large number of votes in the electoral college. Kennedy, however, seized control of Texas, a state with a large number of voters, through his running mate Lyndon B Johnson and the industrial heartland of America in the Northeast with the help of his father through his political connections with influential industrialists. One of the major battlegrounds was Chicago, Illinois, which held a large amount of supporters for both Kennedy and Nixon. Controversies would emerge later about Democratic mayor of Chicago, Richard Daley, rigging the Illinois vote for Kennedy after a conversation he had with Joe Kennedy and, apparently, the Chicago outfit. In the end, Illinois was won by a paper-thin margin of 8,858 votes.



free world still instigate a policy that restricted, oppressed and otherwise degraded American citizens based on their skin colour? It was a question that was becoming urgent, with the broadcast media reporting all the sit-ins and protests of black citizens in the deep south to an anxious American public; the very people Kennedy would have to get on his side if he was to take the presidency and keep hold of it.

As the election loomed in the autumn of 1960, Kennedy was still looking weak on the civil rights issue. He was certainly more liberal than his opponent, but he didn't have anything of substance to beat him with. By coincidence, King was arrested on 19 October – a month before the election – while taking part in a sit-in protest. Kennedy pounced on it as an opportunity. He phoned the shaken Mrs King, saying "I want to express to you my concern about your husband. I understand that you are expecting a baby, and I just wanted you to know that I was thinking about you and Dr King." It galvanised black voters, with King's father saying, "He can be my President, Catholic or whatever he is. It took courage to call my daughter-in-law at a time like this. He has the moral courage to stand up for what he knows is right." King himself was unconvinced. Despite these words, he was still not pushing civil rights; he was playing the political game. It was just words – words enough to capture the presidency, but words nonetheless.

King would call Kennedy's bluff in August 1963 after Kennedy's inaction, marching on Washington with thousands of supporters. Kennedy begged him not to, fearing the marchers would turn violent. But march they did, black and white, the largest demonstration to ever come to the capital, with King at the front of the huge procession, proudly proclaiming, "I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: we hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal." Kennedy looked on open-mouthed; the rapture of the crowd hanging on King's every word was beyond impressive. He immediately invited King and his inner circle to the White House, offering refreshments and a promise to get things moving where he could on civil rights. It was probably a combination of Kennedy's own moral scruples and King's loud insistence that finally got civil rights on the right path, but inaction would still dog Kennedy's record on the agenda.

To say that Kennedy was a mere political opportunist would be grossly unfair, however. He was a man of principles, and the treatment of black communities in the deep South sickened him. However, it is a myth that he was a radical activist of the civil rights movement; he was far too pragmatic for that. Actively supporting the civil rights movement more than he did would have destroyed his support in the South and make what Nixon would later call the 'silent majority' everywhere else uneasy. His presidency did not bring solid change, and his successor Lyndon B Johnson would do far more, but it was a rallying cry for a new beginning. By meeting King and



John F Kennedy in uniform, 1942

John and Jackie on their wedding day in 1953

The Kennedy family relax at their home in Hyannis Port


With Martin Luther King and other delegates from the rally in Washington DC

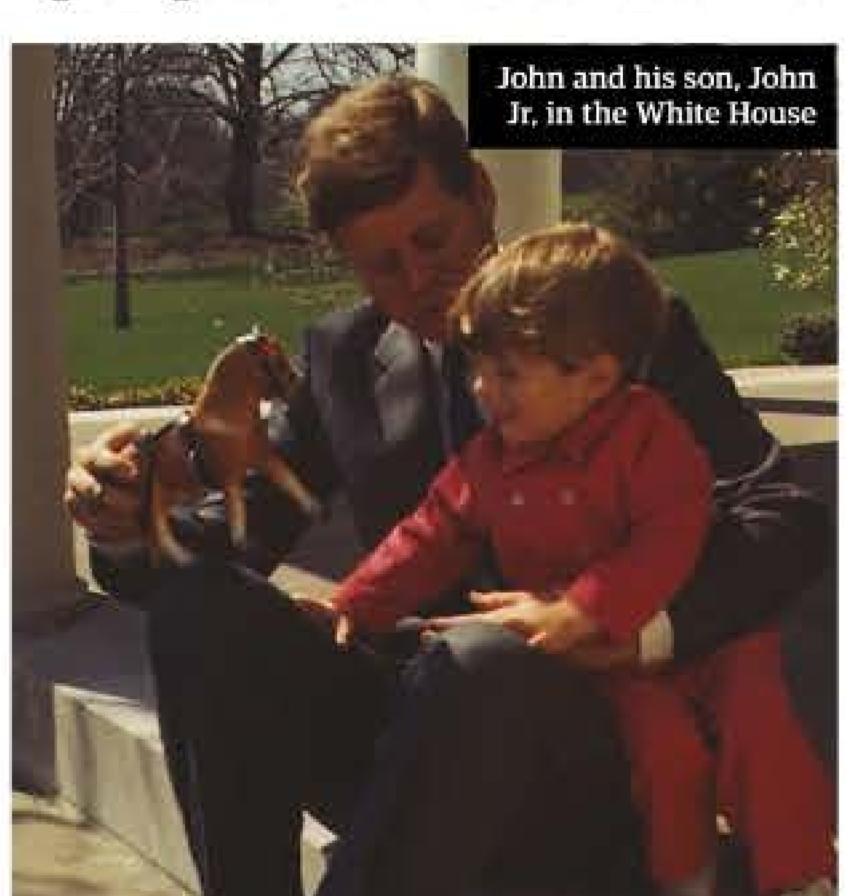


Over 200,000 protestors marched along the Capitol mall in Washington on 28 August 1963


Deep in thought while in transit in the 1960 US Presidential campaign

publicly endorsing the ideal of civil rights for all, even if he did not actively support the campaign in practice, would give civil rights the national platform it needed and Kennedy's own celebrity endorsement to bring civil rights to the top of the national agenda. As Arthur Schlesinger, a social commentator in the Sixties observed, "He had quietly created an atmosphere where change, when it came, would seem no longer an upheaval, but the inexorable unfolding of the promise of American life." Kennedy would not go eyeball-to-eyeball with civil rights, but he would with Communism. It was the realms of foreign affairs where he would make his stand, where there could be no comprise, and where the legend of Kennedy's confrontation with the Soviets would change the world forever.

Communism was not only objectionable as far as Kennedy was concerned, but a moral evil. It stood against everything he believed about human rights and human dignity. The Communist leadership were godless, their state control oppressed its own people and their vast armies oppressed the people of the globe; it was to be despised. When he made his inaugural address he spoke of not daring to "tempt them with weakness. For only when our arms are sufficient beyond doubt can we be certain beyond doubt that they will never be employed." This was the hard line of the Cold War warrior - create the biggest conventional and nuclear arsenal available to scare the Communists into never attacking the free world, and Kennedy believed in it completely. He would go on to talk about the need for reconciliation, but warned against negotiating "out of fear." He had followed the line of


John and his son, John Jr, in the White House

## "Communism was not only objectionable to Kennedy, but a moral evil"

Theodore Roosevelt, the man who flexed American muscle at the turn of the century: tread softly on the international stage, but carry a big stick.

Rhetoric would turn to action when Kennedy gave the green light to the ill-fated Bay of Pigs operation, later to be known as the 'undeniable fiasco'. It was the first major military undertaking of his presidency, but the plan was ill-conceived and flawed from the beginning. Even Kennedy talked about plausible deniability of the whole affair by its end. The plan was for the CIA to land thousands of military-trained Cuban exiles onto the Cuban mainland and, by proxy, enact a coup. It relied on Castro not being in full control of Cuba, although unfortunately for Kennedy he was. As the invasion party landed, Cubans loyal to Castro bombed and machine-gunned the exiles into the sea, causing horrendous casualties. CIA chiefs pleaded with the president to allow the US air force to support the exiles, and initially Kennedy was inclined to agree, saying, "I'd rather be called an aggressor than a bum." Soviet interest in the affair would cool his aggression, and after tense diplomatic negotiation he shied away from further intervention in case the Russians were "apt to cause trouble." It was seen as a betrayal by the CIA and the Cuban exiles, who died in their hundreds on beaches. Neither the CIA nor the exiles would forget it.

The failure of the Bay of Pigs invasion did not temper the attitudes of the president or his closest advisors; quite the contrary. The disaster convinced the Kennedy administration that the Communists needed to be taken seriously, as any more failures would risk goading their aggressive intentions. In the pressurised environment of the White House, straight-talking, hard-ball attitudes and the concoction of the 'red menace' frequently turned strategy into personal vendettas against the Communist leadership for the Kennedy family. Bobby Kennedy, Jack's younger brother and Attorney-General for the American government, took the Bay of Pigs disaster as a personal slight. Castro had made the Kennedy family (and the US) look weak, and now he was going to "get him" by any means necessary, even commissioning a plan for an exploding seashell to be planted at Castro's favourite diving spot. Conversely, Jack didn't order a full invasion of Cuba, nor any provocative move in the region until it was absolutely necessary. In a famous comment made to an aide about the prospect of an American invasion of Cuba, he said: "The minute I land one marine we're in this thing up to our necks. I can't get the United States into a war and then lose it, no matter what it takes. I'm not going to risk a slaughter".

But Kennedy's caution was still infused with the influence of manful bravado inherited from his patriarchal family and the hawks in his own government, who were ever-ready to go toe-to-toe with the Communists. Ultimately, his refusal to 'blink' during the blockade of Cuba brought the world to the brink of nuclear war: for 13 days in

1962, he held the fate of billions in his hands in order to prove to the Russian Premier Khrushchev that when it came to American security there could be no compromise. As with the Bay of Pigs, it was also intensely personal. Kennedy felt deceived by the Soviets, who were talking to him about nuclear disarmament while installing medium-range missiles on the Cuban mainland. He called the Soviets "barefaced liars" and hurled expletives whenever he heard the names of Castro or Khrushchev during meetings in the run up to the blockade. They had made him look foolish and soft on the Communist problem, and the blockade represented the most he could do to confront them without tipping the world into a nuclear holocaust.

Rational thinking gave way to zero-sum thinking on the nature of the international Communist threat after the Cuban Missile Crisis, even if by this point impartial evidence suggested that Communism was not only far weaker, but also hopelessly divided among its global constituents. To Kennedy, however, ever-ready to fight the good fight, the threat was still real and it was engulfing south-east Asia. He ordered more military advisors into Vietnam, as well as the creation of a new fighting force designed to combat Communist insurgents at grass-roots level: the Green Berets .

He publicly endorsed the Diem regime in South Vietnam led by Ngo Dinh Diem, despite private reservations about their effectiveness and cruelty to their own people. As the war intensified, Diem, a stanch Catholic, was drawing ever more criticism from his own people, the majority of who were Buddhist. After brutal crackdowns on the Buddhist community at the beginning of 1963, monks set themselves on fire in the middle of a busy street in Saigon in protest. The response by one of Diem's closet advisors, his sister-in-law Madame Ngo Dinh Nhu, was heartless. She told a CBS film crew that the Buddhists had just "barbecued" themselves, and next time she would provide the mustard. For Kennedy, a man who lived shoulder to shoulder with the media, this was a disaster. The regime that America was supposed to be protecting was in fact a cruel dictatorship. Kennedy's troops remained in Vietnam even after the brutal events of 1963 as Diem's regime may have been harsh, but as far as Kennedy's administration was concerned, at least it wasn't Communist.

The memory of Kennedy's legendary stand-off with Communism would linger in the halls of the White House after his death. No future president would dare look weak in front of the Communist, prompting a military invasion of Vietnam by Johnson and a perception that any failure to contain Communism across the globe was a de-facto failure of the current American administration. Debates about whether the Vietnam War would have been conducted differently if Kennedy had been at the helm endure. Kennedy



Kennedy looks deep in thought as he awaits developments in the Cuban crisis that could have escalated to nuclear war

Kennedy children visit the Oval Office

President Kennedy presiding over a meeting with senior White House officials during the Cuban Missile Crisis



## First lady

Jackie Kennedy was a woman of intelligence, beauty and money; a true American socialite. She was born into one of the wealthiest Catholic families in America, and her father, John Vernou 'Black Jack' Bouvier, owned land and capital throughout the Northeast. She met John Fitzgerald Kennedy through her work as a photographer in Washington DC, marrying him on 12 September 1953 after a whirlwind romance. In many ways she set the tone for future First Ladies.

Like her husband she courted the media, making sure she always dressed immaculately and remained on message for press interviews. But she also made the position her own, and was a force for change in the White House, seeing to it that the unique furniture, ornaments and pictures within its rooms were preserved and catalogued, where before they had either been lost or neglected by previous occupants. She established the post of White House Curator, and created the White House Fine Arts Committee to protect the treasures inside its walls. She could also speak several foreign languages, which she would use to her advantage on goodwill missions abroad. Her charm and grace enamoured foreign dignitaries, and after one trip to Paris, Vienna and Greece, Clark Clifford, advisor to the president sent her a congratulatory note saying, "Once in a great while, an individual will capture the imagination of people all over the world. You have done this... through your graciousness and tact." As her celebrity status spread, she received so much fan mail that it required 13 people to process the letters. Often they were deeply personal, with a girl from Indonesia writing, "I've seen pictures of you. I am studying English because I admire you so much." Another from a Japanese girl said, "My mother tells me not to slump so that I will grow up to be tall and queenly like you." She became so popular that her husband often joked that it was Jackie people wanted to see. She always put her family first, ensuring that her children were well-cared for and educated, saying to a reporter, "If you bungle raising your children, I don't think whatever else you do well matters very much."



Kennedy meets with US Army officials during the Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962

Kennedy signs the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty in the White House Treaty Room on 7 October 1963

President and Mrs Kennedy with leaders of the Cuban Invasion Brigade

"His image as young, energetic and tough chimed well with the mood of the US"

balked at appearing weak in front of the Communists, but he was a far more able negotiator than his successors and, it is said by some, would have brought Vietnam to a peaceful conclusion far quicker and with less casualties. But part of Kennedy's success was due to his international grandstanding. His image as young, energetic and tough chimed well with the mood of a US that wanted an assertive nation and cut away from the stagnation of the Eisenhower years and the defeats under Truman. It is unlikely Kennedy would have ordered a full withdrawal at Vietnam, but part of his enduring persona has, like the issues surrounding civil rights, created a myth that things would have been very different - and a lot better - had he survived.

The bleak days of November 1963 would haunt America forever. Kennedy's funeral took place on 25 November, three days after his assassination. As his funeral procession made its long march up to St Matthew's Cathedral, it was accompanied by Black Jack, a riderless horse symbolising the loss of a great leader. When his casket was brought out after the service, foreign dignitaries including Charles de Gaulle of France and thousands of American citizens watched in silence. Troops of the United States Navy brought the casket down the steep steps, and as it reached the bottom Jackie Kennedy knelt down and whispered to her son, John Jr: "John, you can salute your daddy now and say goodbye to him." Author William Manchester noted, "Of all of Monday's images, nothing approached the force of John's salute... it was heart-wrenching." In summing up the day's events, columnist Mary McGrory wrote of "grief nobly borne." Kennedy's final resting place was the Arlington National Cemetery - as befitting an American hero.

On hearing of Kennedy's death, British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan said that Kennedy embodied "all the hopes and aspirations of this new world." His influence continues to be felt; Barack Obama's 'Hope' campaign for a new beginning in the US was influenced by Kennedy's own in 1960. Kennedy was a man that could be admired, followed and respected. His death shocked everyone, and his boundless potential and hope for a better and more peaceful world was lost forever, along with the man that he might have become.

# The other women

## Marilyn Monroe



The Marilyn Monroe affair was probably the most infamous of Kennedy's relationships during his time in government. The two met through Peter Lawford on four separate occasions, one of which, it is claimed, resulted in sexual relations. Her raunchy rendition of *Happy Birthday* during Kennedy's 45th birthday celebrations and the dress she was wearing at the time, described as "flesh with sequins sewed onto it," left little to the imagination.

## Judith Campbell



Long the subject of repeated denials and cover-ups, until revelations in the Seventies revealed that Kennedy indeed had an on-off affair with Campbell, who was also linked with Mob bosses Sam Giancana and John Roselli. It was one of the most enduring affairs Kennedy had, and he was aware of the risks to his political career of sleeping with a woman with connections to the Mafia, but carried on.

## Gunilla Von Post

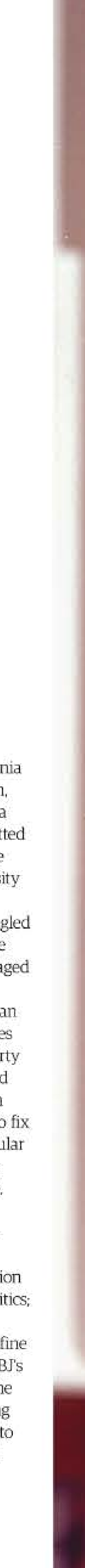


The Von Post affair started just after Kennedy was married. Von Post was a Swedish socialite, meeting Kennedy on the French Riviera after her aristocratic family sent her there to brush up on her French. A passionate affair ensued, with graphic love letters and lustful liaisons occurring throughout the Fifties. The tryst was so serious that Kennedy reportedly considered leaving Jackie for her, but feared his father's reaction.

## The one that got away... Sophia Loren



In a rather embarrassing episode, Sophia Loren, one of the most iconic film stars of the age, turned Kennedy down, and in no uncertain terms told him and his lackey to leave her alone during a dinner at the Italian Embassy in Washington in the late Fifties. This was despite Kennedy's gallant offer to include her female interpreter in a night of passion so that she didn't feel left out.



## 1963 – 1969

# Lyndon B Johnson

## 'Landslide Lyndon' was one of the most popular presidents of all time, but in a matter of years he was loathed by the nation

36

**LYNDON B JOHNSON**

**Democrat, 1908 - 1973**

**Brief Bio**

Born in a small farmhouse in Stonewall, Texas, Johnson rose out of poverty to become the 36th president of the United States. While serving as president he oversaw one of the most progressive periods in the country's history, declaring war on poverty and racial discrimination. However, Johnson escalated the USA's role in the Vietnam war and bred a nation of disillusioned youth.

When John F Kennedy was shot and killed in Dallas, Texas on 22 November 1963 he was replaced by a man he had fought against in the run up to election. Lyndon B Johnson was nothing like Kennedy: he wasn't young, he wasn't particularly charming or camera-ready, but he was a brilliant and skilled politician. He had support from a wide portion of the American people, however, in just over five years he would retire from the White House as one of the most unpopular presidents in US history. Today historians continue to argue over his ground-breaking policies and how one man could be such a force for good, but also responsible for one of the darkest periods in American history.

Texas wasn't just the place of Johnson's birth, it was in his blood. The Johnson family was so ingrained in Texas that Johnson City in the state was named after Johnson's own cousin. The Johnson family had fought for the Confederacy in the Civil War and had lived there, taming the land as farmers and ranchers for years previously. Johnson's father had been a gifted politician himself, but he also amassed huge debts, and in Lyndon's early years, lost the family farm and descended into financial crisis. There is no doubting that this brush with poverty had a striking effect on Johnson.

Even in his youngest days, Johnson had a gift for talking. In high school he was elected class president and was a keen member of the debate team. However, he was not particularly gifted at school and, amidst pressure from his parents, struggled to get into college. He moved to California in an effort to find a college that would enrol him, and supported himself by picking grapes. It was a difficult period in the young Johnson's life; he flitted from job to job and got into trouble, but finally he managed to obtain a place at Texas State University in 1926, two years after graduating high school.

Not only was Johnson the first president to be sworn in aboard an aircraft, but he was also the first to be sworn in by a woman

Despite enrolling in college, Johnson still struggled to support himself financially, and took time out to teach at a school for disadvantaged Mexican-American students. His experience there gave Johnson an unfiltered glimpse into the lives of those facing extreme poverty and racial discrimination, and this had a profound effect on the young man. The desire to fix these two problems in particular would prove to be his driving force through the rest of his life.

Johnson's political ambitions were already starting to form, and in 1931 he became a legislative secretary to Congressman Richard M Kleberg. In such a position Johnson was thrust headfirst into the web of politics; he met many influential people, congressmen, newspapermen and lobbyists and he began to refine his own political skills. The political world was LBJ's natural environment and he flourished. In 1934 he met his future wife, Claudia Alta Taylor. Charming and intelligent, she was the perfect complement to the coarse and passionate Johnson. In just three months they were married and she served as





# Life in the time of Lyndon B Johnson

## The end of prosperity

While Johnson was still young, the United States experienced the worst economic decline in its history. Not only were thousands out of work, but thousands more were forced to abandon their farms in the heartland due to horrific dust storms. This in turn spawned lawlessness and increased crime.

## World War II

The Second World War was hugely costly to the United States, and it affected not only those fighting abroad, but those on the home front. Women rapidly entered the workforce, many for the first time, and the number of high school drop-outs increased. 20 million people struggled on the border of starvation due to shortages of food, hospital beds, housing and child-care.

## The US rules

In the post-war years the US boasted the strongest military and economy in the world. For its citizens this meant they could enjoy a wealth of consumer goods such as cars and televisions, which were available to more people than ever. The US also experienced a baby boom, with approximately four million babies born each year during the 1950s.

## A house in the suburbs

With so many new families being created, there was a huge increase of Americans moving to small, inexpensive houses in the suburbs. However, the idealised suburban life of a white picket fence wasn't quite what it seemed. Many American women felt trapped and dissatisfied with a life of quietly rearing children behind closed doors.

## The youth rebel

Disillusioned with the mounting war in Vietnam, many young Americans chose to reject traditional values in every way they could. They protested, wore their hair long, listened to artists such as Bob Dylan and gathered at Hippie rock festivals.



## The president and the King

One of the most significant and controversial relationships in Johnson's life was with the civil rights trailblazer Martin Luther King Jr. Their complicated partnership has filled books and inspired films, with some claiming that Johnson was reluctant to help King achieve equal voting rights for black Americans. However, others have stated that the partnership between the two charismatic men was one of the most consequential in American history. Those who worked with Johnson insist that he was supportive and enthusiastic about voting rights, urging King to organise rallies and protests. King himself wrote that the two of them did 'differ concerning the tempo' but that he had genuine involvement in the issues. Taped interviews of the meetings between the men indicate that Johnson had been pressuring the Justice Department for some time to develop voting right legislation. However, they also reveal that the president was hesitant for the public to view him as close to the controversial civil rights leader. Regardless of whether Johnson did prioritise King's aims or not, the two remarkable men both played a part in the ultimate Civil Rights Act. On 2 July 1964 Johnson signed it into law, and a few months later gave the very same pen to King who called it one of his "most cherished possessions."

# "[He] seized the chance to use Kennedy's memory to power his own goals"

Johnson's most trusted aide. Her modest inheritance would later fund his 1937 run for Congress.

The money and Johnson's abilities secured him a place in Congress aged at 28 years old. He was smart, hardworking, and he won allies quickly, including President Roosevelt. However, he failed to win a Senate seat and in 1941 fate and war led him elsewhere, and he became the first member of Congress to volunteer for active duty as a navy lieutenant commander. His stint in the navy was brief, but he won a Silver Star before he and when all serving members of Congress were ordered to leave active service. In 1948 he finally made it into the Senate. The appointment wasn't without controversy, however. Allegations of voter fraud prompted his opponents to dub him 'Landslide Lyndon'. Despite this he advanced quickly through the Senate: by 1953 he was elected majority leader and by 1960 he had set his sights on the White House.

Unfortunately for Johnson, someone else was eyeing the same prize. Young, handsome, rich and charismatic, John F Kennedy wooed and impressed his fellow Democrats and snatched the role of Democratic candidate from under Johnson's nose. The two men didn't get on, but Johnson needed Kennedy's newfound power, and Kennedy needed Johnson's popularity in the southern states and the unlikely duo teamed up in the 1960 presidential campaign. They won by the smallest popular margin of the century.

> Upon seeing the official portrait of himself by famed artist Peter Hurd, Johnson rejected it, declaring it "the ugliest thing I ever saw"

Johnson was ill-suited to the vice presidency, as Kennedy and the majority of his administration placed no great trust in him and LBJ found himself locked out of the president's inner circle. Despite this, Johnson did make some waves, he headed the space program and worked on pushing through civil rights legislation. Johnson, however, with his driving ambition and grand dreams of curing America of poverty remained frustrated by his lack of influence, but wouldn't have to wait long to take centre stage. On 22 November 1963, three years into his presidency, Kennedy was assassinated. Johnson was only two cars behind him. Just a few hours later the coarse Texan was sworn in as president.

Now in the driving seat, Johnson could finally begin pushing his vision for a 'War on Poverty.' The new president seized the chance to use Kennedy's memory to power his own goals and legislative agendas, sending his Economic Opportunity Act, designed to tackle local poverty, to Congress as quickly as possible. He also pushed through, with a combination of great political manoeuvring and sheer force of will, the 1964 Civil Rights Bill. Johnson



### *Defining moment*
### Kennedy vs Johnson 1960

Johnson enjoyed success at the Senate and was a prime contender for the Democratic presidential candidacy. The only other real competition was an ambitious young man called John F Kennedy. Johnson chose to delay his campaign, believing that Kennedy would cause a division in the party, but instead this gave the charismatic man a lead. Johnson completely underestimated Kennedy's charm and, in a mad fear of failure, formed a 'Stop Kennedy' coalition, which was unsuccessful. Johnson received only 409 votes to Kennedy's 806. It was with shock then, that Kennedy offered the vice-presidential nomination to Johnson, who then accepted. Whether it was in an effort to win, or simply an act of courtesy, Kennedy's actions would profoundly affect the future of the US in ways he could never have comprehend.

## *Timeline*

1908

**Johnson is born**
Johnson is born in central Texas in a small farmhouse to Samuel Ealy Johnson and Rebekah Baines. He is the oldest of what will eventually become five siblings: a brother, Sam, and three sisters, Rebekah, josefa and Lucia.
**27 August 1908**

**Johnson refines his skills**
The young Johnson enrols at SWTSTC, now known as Texas State University. He becomes very involved in school activities, including editing the newspaper and participating in various college debates.
**1926**



**The bitter truth**
In order to earn money to complete his education, Johnson takes a job teaching Mexican-American children. It has a profound effect on him, as he realises that entry to college would be impossible to almost all of them. He decides to create a nation where the door to knowledge is open to all Americans.
**1928-1929**

**Entry into politics**
Johnson first dips his toe into the world of politics by campaigning for Texas State Senator Welly Hopkins in his run for Congress. The experience has a profound effect on him, however, and he will quickly climb the ranks.
**1931**

**Tying the knot**
After a short courtship and engagement, Johnson marries Claudia Alta Taylor, also known as 'Lady Bird', in . They will go on to have two daughters, all with LBJ initials – Lynda Bird, born in 1944, and Luci Baines, born in 1947.
**17 November 1934**



immediately feared a backlash from the southern white population, but when he ran for election in 1964 he won by the biggest popular margin in history. Kennedy had been liked, but without him, Johnson was more popular than ever.

Now Johnson had four more years to put his plans into action, and his sights focused on his 'Great Society'. This legislative agenda would become one of the most impactful and far-reaching programs in the country's history. Johnson orchestrated the passage of Medicare, pushed through three civil rights bills, which outlawed discrimination in housing, voting and commerce. He poured money into urban renewal, championed the arts and education and targeted crime. It was everything that Johnson had dreamed of doing since teaching in that classroom decades ago. Unfortunately for the president, there was another war he would have to fight.

The conflict in Vietnam was waging on. Johnson was determined to prevent the spread of communism, just like the men who had sat in the White House before him, and believed the only way to do that was to stop the Viet Cong from taking South Vietnam, and he was willing to do anything to prevent it. Johnson poured money and men into Vietnam, with troop numbers soaring from 16,000 to more than 500,000 in five years. This inevitably meant American casualties sky-rocketed, and many Americans took a stand against the war. Anti-war campaigns gained support across the country, and when some ended in tragedy, Johnson's popularity drifted steadily downwards.

Johnson was stuck between a rock and a hard place. He wasn't the sort of man to admit defeat, and he had already poured countless funds into winning what was now so obviously an unwinnable war. His bombing campaigns did nothing but produce horrific images to fill the pages of newspapers. In private Johnson cursed the war, saying "If I left the woman I really loved - the Great Society - in order to get involved in that bitch of a war on the other side of the world, then I would lose everything at home." Like it or not, Johnson was already losing everything before the war was lost. His approval rating had plummeted and in just four short years the record-breaking winner had become one of America's most unpopular presidents of all time.

Despite his low approval rating, when Johnson announced he would not seek or accept a nomination as the Democrats' candidate in 1968, the country was shocked. But in reality he had lost control of his own party, which was now split into four rival factions. Privately he was dealing with worsening health issues. Johnson vacated the running race, and with his party in tatters, the White House doors were open for the Republican candidate, Richard Nixon to walk in.

Johnson, meanwhile, returned home to his ranch in Stonewall, Texas to work on his memoirs, perhaps aware of how little time remained. In 1970 Johnson suffered an attack of angina, the following year he had a heart attack. His condition rapidly worsened and he was rushed to hospital for surgery. However, his condition was too severe to operate and was diagnosed as terminal. The ex-president died on 22 January 1973, two days after Nixon's inauguration. Johnson was honoured with a state funeral and buried in his family cemetery. Johnson remains one of the most controversial and divisive presidents of all time; an outspoken man with idealistic but sincere aims, torn asunder by fighting an unwinnable war.



## *Defining moment*

### The 'Great Society' 1964-1965

One of the central driving factors in Johnson's presidency was his vision of the 'Great Society', seen as the elimination of racial injustice and poverty. Johnson pursued these aims tirelessly, and combated racial injustice with the Civil Rights Act in 1964 and 1968 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. However, due to having personal experience of poverty, it was legislation to end poverty that dominated Johnson's presidency, declaring it his 'War on Poverty.' He introduced Medicare and Medicaid, providing free medical care to needy Americans, the Food Stamp Act of 1964, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and the Economic Opportunity Act. Johnson's War on Poverty enabled millions of Americans to rise above the poverty line.




## *Defining moment*

### Rolling thunder 1964-1968

America's involvement in Vietnam dramatically changed when Johnson became president. He immediately reversed Kennedy's order to withdraw military personnel, and instead chose to expand the American military numbers in the conflict. When this proved ineffective he launched a systematic bombing campaign to grasp victory from defeat. However, when this also failed to result in the desired outcome he poured more men and money into the conflict, and by the end of October 1965 American troops in Vietnam numbered 200,000. In the following years this number grew and grew, and faith in the president plummeted. The Tet Offensive in 1968 was the final nail in Johnson's coffin, turning popular opinion against the war, and against the president.

**A rushed inauguration**
2 hours and 8 minutes after the assassination of Kennedy, Johnson is hastily sworn in as president on Air Force One. There are immediate fears that he could be the next target in a conspiracy against the government.
**22 November 1963**

**An historic victory**
Johnson runs against Republican Barry Goldwater in the 1964 presidential election. Despite early indication that Goldwater may win, Johnson wins the election with 61 per cent - the widest popular margin in American history.
**1964**

**The Voting Rights Act**
At the height of the civil rights movement, and urged by Martin Luther King Jr, Johnson pushes debate on the voting rights bill in February 1965. Finally becoming effective on 6 August 1965, the Voting Rights Act prohibits racial discrimination in voting.
**1965**



**The president steps down**
In a shocking turn of events, Johnson announces that he will not be running for re-election, declaring, "I shall not seek, and I will not accept, the nomination of my party for another term as your president." Ironically this sees his approval rating increase dramatically.
**1968**

1973

**Johnson dies**
After being diagnosed with a terminal heart condition, Johnson dies at home at his ranch in Texas. He is buried in his family cemetery, only a few yards from the house of his birth.
**22 January 1973**

1969 – 1974

# Richard Nixon

## One of the most controversial and enigmatic presidents ever, Nixon's legacy will forever be tarnished by the scandal that led to his downfall

With beads of sweat forming at his brow, the president of the United States of America looks straight down the lens of a television camera and says defiantly: "I'm not a crook." The president, Richard Nixon, is in the middle of an hour-long televised question-and-answer session with over 400 journalists. That the leader of the world's foremost superpower is forced to make such an astonishing statement shows the scale of a scandal that has spread like wildfire through the White House. It will lead to the first and only resignation of an incumbent president to date and become the defining political misdemeanour of the 20th century.

So seismic is Watergate that the last syllable will be added as a suffix to any public series of events deemed scandalous, yet the origins are seemingly small-fry in comparison to many political controversies - a burglary at the Watergate Hotel, the site of the Democratic National Committee.

At the time Richard Nixon delivers the quote, late in 1973, the walls are beginning to close around him, yet it will take almost another year for the president to tender his resignation following a 'death by a thousand cuts' that sees allies and aides resigning or cast ruthlessly aside. Days before Nixon resigns, beleaguered and facing impeachment, he consults an old colleague, Henry Kissinger, on his options. Seeing a broken man in torment at the prospect of only the second presidential impeachment and a potential criminal trial, Kissinger tries to console Nixon and even accedes to his request that the pair of them get down on their knees and pray. That it has come to this is an indication of the devastating nature of the revelations over a dirty-tricks campaign that struck at the heart of the White House.

18 months earlier, on 17 June 1972, five men had been arrested by police on the sixth floor of the Watergate Hotel building in Washington, DC. Noticing that a number of doors have been taped open to prevent them from locking, a security guard called the police. All five were arrested and found to have connections with the CIA and a group that raised funds for the re-election of Richard Nixon, the Committee for the Re-Election of the President (CRP), often satirically abbreviated to CREEP.

Nixon is a familiar face, having been a vice president to Dwight Eisenhower between 1952 and 1960 and previously unsuccessfully fighting John F Kennedy for the White House. During a debate, the future president falls foul of a relatively new medium in political campaigning - while voters listening on the radio believe that Nixon has triumphed, television viewers are won over by JFK's good looks and charm; they are equally dismayed by Nixon's hunched shoulders, jowly appearance and sweaty brow. But, having narrowly won the presidency in 1968, Nixon wins by a landslide in 1972 and enjoys approval ratings of more than 70 per cent - almost unheard of for a president in his second term.

However, Nixon deploys an array of dubious techniques to smear opponents. The CRP becomes a de facto intelligence organisation engaged in dirty campaigns against potential rivals: bugging offices, seeking material that could be used against opponents and attempting to prevent leaks to the media. While the CRP is technically and officially a private fundraising group, its existence and true nature is known to several federal government employees and Nixon himself - while he is aware that the CRP gathers intelligence on his rivals and administration's enemies, conversations reveal that





37

## RICHARD NIXON

**Republican, 1913 - 1994**

*Brief Bio*

A California senator who was vice president for eight years under Eisenhower, Nixon was elected to the presidency himself in 1968 and would go on to become one of the most controversial leaders in history. Though he officially ended US involvement in Vietnam, Nixon will always be remembered for his involvement in the Watergate scandal, which ultimately led to his resignation.

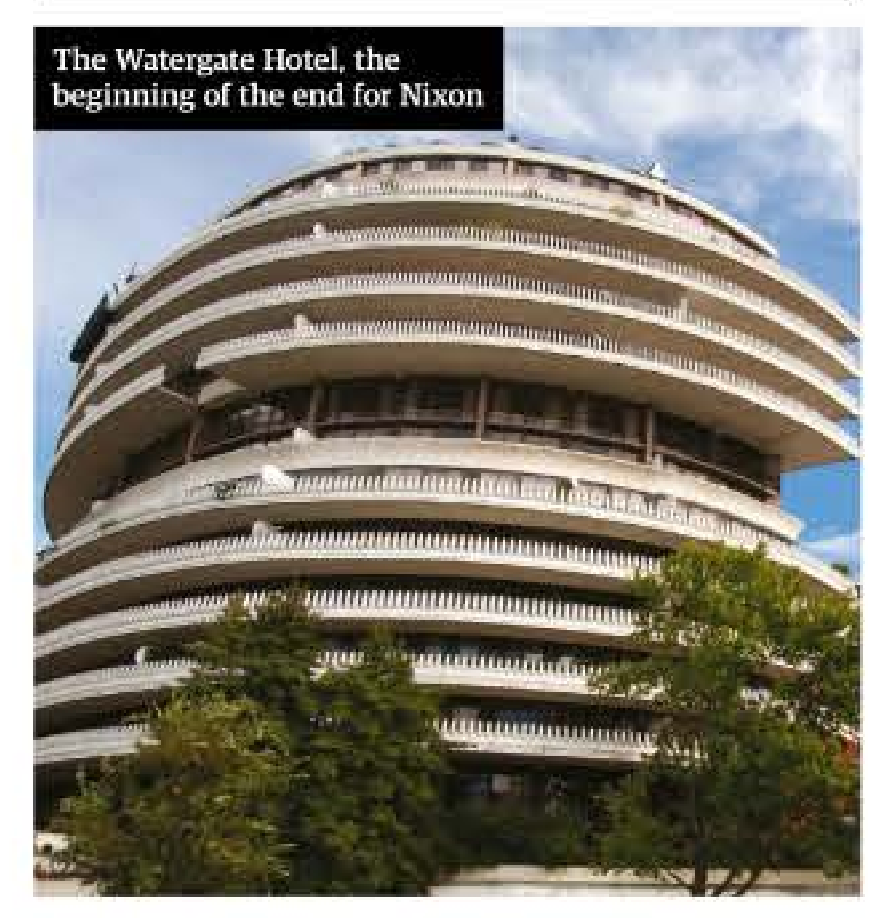
## Why Watergate?

### What was the motive behind the biggest political scandal of the 20th century?

The reason the Watergate burglaries remained shrouded in mystery for decades was the conflicting reports from the various parties involved. Certainly, those involved in the burglaries - including prominent members of the White House Plumbers, a covert intelligence group acting with the tacit approval of Nixon - were working on behalf of Nixon, whether the president was aware of the specific activities or not. That Nixon learned about Watergate and sought a cover-up is beyond dispute.

Various sources indicate that government agencies believed that the Cuban government - one of USA's greatest ideological foes of the time - was funding the rival Democratic Party or that people in the upper echelons of government were keen to smear or bug Democratic bigwigs or retrieve previously installed wires. What may have begun as an attempt to prevent classified documents being leaked to the press degenerated into a dirty-tricks campaign against political opponents that was as widespread as it was inept.

No definitive motive has ever come to light, with even those involved seemingly evasive or confused - perhaps due to the passage of time, the desire to paint their own motives as righteous or contemporaneous misinformation - over the true motive behind the biggest US political scandal of the 20th century. Perhaps the old maxim about absolute power rings truest here, where 'The President's Men' ordered the burglary and the president approved the cover-up simply because they could.


The Watergate Hotel, the beginning of the end for Nixon

he is either unaware of the scale of their activities or simply chooses not to know.

The five men arrested at the Watergate were likely there either to recover bugs that had been left on the telephone of senior Democrats or install new surveillance equipment but originally little significance is ascribed to the break-in. When the *Washington Post*'s rookie reporter Bob Woodward is sent to a local courthouse to cover the story, he discovers that the five men are no ordinary burglars, being found with unusually advanced bugging equipment and a surprisingly high-powered attorney. One of the men, James McCord, admits that he has previously worked for the CIA - Woodward connects him to E Howard Hunt and Charles Colson using phone books belonging to the men. Colson will claim that upon hearing of the arrests the day after they took place, Nixon hurled an ashtray at the wall in fury.

Hunt is another CIA operative with a colourful background - he had once been accused of involvement in the assassination of JFK; anecdotal evidence implies he may have been in Dallas at the time of the killing - and at the time was working for the White House Plumbers, a shadowy group that worked to prevent classified information being leaked to the media from the Nixon administration.

While the existence of the Plumbers - comprising a mix of CIA operatives, Republican aides and assorted security personnel - is known to Nixon, the extent of their activities is initially kept from him by senior staff. The group had come into existence from a desire to undermine the Republicans' enemies - a 1971 memo suggested the group use any federal machinery "to screw our political enemies" - but the line between what constitutes enemies of America, the Nixon administration and the Republican Party becomes blurred. Colson is a special counsel, essentially a lawyer, and Woodward realises that he, unlike Hunt, is a genuine link between the Watergate burglary and the White House.

In 1972, Woodward is teamed with another reporter, Carl Bernstein, and the pair is urged to develop the story by the *Post*'s executive editor. Woodward contacts an FBI source he has previously used, and using an elaborate system of signals and instructions he is told that the scandal originates in the White House. The source is referred to as Deep Throat.

When Hunt, G Gordon Liddy and the five burglars are indicted on federal charges relating to





Protestors congregate outside the White House as pressure on Nixon mounts

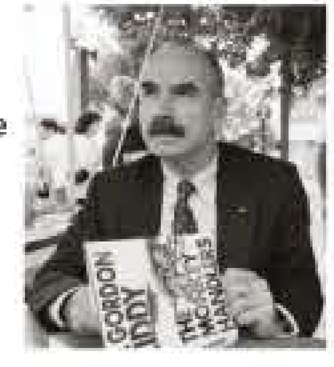
the burglary, Hunt demands money from the CRP and White House to support the seven's legal fees - essentially hush money. They are all convicted in early-1973 and given stiff sentences, reflecting Judge John Sirica's belief that the men are lying about their external help. The president announces that a full investigation has occurred and found no evidence of wrongdoing - while in fact no investigation has taken place. In his announcement, Nixon says: "I can say categorically that his investigation indicates that no one on the White House staff, no one in this administration, presently employed, was involved in this very bizarre incident. What really hurts in matters of this sort is not the fact that they occur, because overzealous people in campaigns do things that are wrong. What really hurts is if you try to cover it up."

The words will prove to be prescient. Payments to the jailed men create a paper trail that implicates senior figures in the administration. Woodward deduces that the chief of staff, HR Haldeman and Attorney General John Mitchell are also implicated. Deep Throat claims the Watergate break-in was masterminded by Haldeman and also states that the lives of the two reporters may be in jeopardy:

## Timeline

1972

**First arrests**
A security guard notices suspicious activity and the White House Plumbers are arrested in the Democratic National Committee offices at the Watergate Hotel.
**17 June 1972**




**McCord confesses**
One of the Watergate burglars, James McCord, writes a letter to Judge John Sirica claiming that he lied during trial and that the burglary had in fact involved other government officials.
**17 March 1973**

**Nixon implicated**
Presidential counsel John Dean tells Watergate investigators that he has discussed the cover-up of the scandal with Nixon at least 35 times.
**3 June 1973**

**Butterfield's admission**
Alexander Butterfield, a former presidential secretary, makes the startling revelation that all conversations and telephone calls in White House offices have been covertly taped since 1971.
**13 July 1973**

**Impeachment process begins**
Nixon is ordered to hand over tapes to investigators by the Supreme Court. Congress begins impeachment proceedings.
**24 July 1974**



The accused Watergate burglars and their lawyer, 9 January, 1973

Woodward and Bernstein press on regardless and write a book, *All The President's Men*, later turned into a film, about their experience of the scandal.

While Woodward and Bernstein are busy uncovering the paper trail to the White House, another revelation will prove just as disastrous for Nixon. James McCord sends a letter to Judge Sirica in March 1973, explaining that he has perjured himself, alleging orders from high up in the White House. Also in March, Nixon gets a lengthy rundown from John Dean on the scale of the dirty-tricks campaign and how the Watergate burglary came to happen. Nixon listens, appalled, as Dean recounts the web of deceit in which many of his staff are now trapped - Dean's prognosis is grim: "We have a cancer, close to the Presidency, that's growing. It's growing daily. It's compounding, it grows geometrically now because it compounds itself."

An exasperated Nixon sighs his way through Dean's prognosis, which reveals illegal activities, blackmail and perjury on a grand scale. It is clear the chain is only as strong as its weakest link - and those are cropping up everywhere as the net tightens. Asked about his personal feelings on the matter, Dean replies he is not confident the administration can ride it out. Even Dean himself is starting to feel the pressure and can't shake the impression that he is being set up as a scapegoat. He is probably correct: Nixon fires Dean, who turns star witness for the prosecution, and the president rolls the dice and gambles by disposing of some of his most trusted lieutenants, asking for the resignation of both Haldeman and Ehrlichman. Richard Kleindienst also resigns.

Coincidentally, at around this time, confirmation hearings begin for installing L Patrick Gray as permanent director of the FBI. During the hearings, Gray reveals that he has provided daily updates on the Watergate investigation to the White House and alleges that John Dean has "probably lied" to FBI investigators, enraging the White House. It is subsequently revealed that Gray has disposed of some of the contents of a safe belonging to Hunt - drawing the FBI into a web of deceit along with the CIA, the federal government and the Republican Party - forcing his resignation in April 1973. In just a few turbulent weeks Nixon had lost his three most trusted lieutenants, his attorney general and the head of the FBI. By May, more people disapprove than approve of Richard Nixon's presidency and a month later the Watergate hearings are being televised; viewers see John Dean tell investigators that he had discussed the cover-up with Nixon at least 35 times. Although Nixon can plausibly deny knowledge of the CRP campaigns and protect himself by firing staff, things are about to get much worse for the president.

Nixon is a suspicious individual who has few real friends and sees conspiracies against him everywhere. Given to brooding behaviour and capable of vulgar outbursts and ruthless behaviour, the president will later acknowledge that the American people knew little of his real personality. This side of his personality was to be his undoing. Known only to a few individuals, Nixon has had secret recording equipment installed in the Oval Office, Cabinet Room and his private office in the White House. The resulting tapes are vital in proving his knowledge of - and active participation in - the Watergate cover-up and wider culpability in allowing his aides to commit behaviour both immoral and illegal.

Nixon has been at the sharp end of American politics for decades. He has made powerful friends and enemies alike and learned how to play dirty,

**Smoking Gun**
The Smoking Gun tape, including an incriminating conversation between Nixon and Haldeman formulating the cover-up, is released by the White House. Opinion quickly turns against Nixon.
**3 August 1974**



**The resignation**
Nixon announces his resignation of the presidency. Vice president Gerald Ford succeeds him as president for the remainder of the term, until 1977.
**9 August 1974**



**Convictions**
John N Mitchell, John Ehrlichman and HR Haldeman are all convicted of conspiracy, obstruction of justice and perjury. All three go on to serve prison sentences of at least 18 months.
**1 January 1975**



1919

**Frost/Nixon**
Nixon gives his first major interview about the Watergate scandal with British journalist David Frost. This series of talks would be dramatised in the film *Frost/Nixon*.
**4 May 1977**

even ordering tax investigations on Kennedy and 1972's Democratic presidential candidate, Hubert Humphrey. On the tapes, Nixon is heard to remark: "I can only hope that we are, frankly, doing a little persecuting. Right?"

In the run-up to the presidential election of 1972, when it looks like Ted Kennedy - brother of JFK - will be a potential opponent for the 1976 election, Nixon and his aides attempt to use the Secret Service to spy on the Democrat senator in the hope of discovering material they can use to smear him. Such operations have been learned over 25 years in politics - Nixon smears his first political opponents as communists or communist sympathisers during his 1946 and 1950 Congress election runs. His nickname, Tricky Dicky, is devised during 1950 and he finds it hard to shake. Nixon also uses the shooting of presidential hopeful George McGovern in 1972 as an opportunity to place a loyal man within a security protection detail on Ted Kennedy. The spy, Robert Newbrand, is to pass information back to the White House. "[W]e just might get lucky and catch this son of a bitch and ruin him for '76", says Nixon of Kennedy.

In light of what the president knows to be on the tapes, July 1973 brings a bombshell that Nixon instantly recognises as disastrous. The aide responsible for the president's schedule and day-to-day archiving testifies that Nixon has had recording equipment secretly installed throughout White House offices. The ramifications are obvious, with the tapes laying bare just how widespread the use of dirty tricks are and how the orders frequently come direct from the president.

Archibald Cox, leading the hearings, instantly subpoenas the tapes. Realising the gravity of the situation, Nixon refuses the request, citing executive privilege and - for the next few months - begins a high-stakes game of bureaucratic cat and mouse in an effort to keep the tapes in his possession. In October, just days after losing his vice president, Spiro Agnew, to an investigation into past corruption, Nixon astonishes his advisors by ordering Cox's firing - something only Elliot Richardson, the attorney general, could legally do.

The president, furious at Cox's intransigence over refusing to accede to an offer to appoint a Democrat senator to listen to the tapes, rather than hand them over, makes it clear that he will accept the resignation of Richardson and Deputy Attorney General William Ruckelshaus if they do not sack Cox. On a night in October, dubbed the Saturday Night Massacre, Richardson refuses the order and promptly resigns. Having been given the same order by Nixon, Ruckelshaus also refuses and resigns, leaving Solicitor General Robert Bork to reluctantly carry out the order.



Nixon met by an angry crowd while campaigning during the height of the Watergate scandal, 1974

Public opinion quickly turns against Nixon, with protests greeting the president's public appearances. In November, he goes on the offensive, delivering a televised question-and-answer session where he delivers the famous "I'm not a crook" speech. He claims the tapes will exonerate him, but knows that this is not the case and that his political manoeuvrings are merely buying time: his presidency is a busted flush. Nixon had earlier recognised the danger the tapes posed and asked Haldeman to dispose of them: "Most of it is worth destroying", says the president. "Would you like - would you do that?" Haldeman replies in the affirmative but crucially is not as good as his word, perhaps believing that if he is seen to be responsible for destroying the tapes he would make the president bulletproof and seal his own fate.

In July 1974, having exhausted various means of preventing their release, including releasing transcripts and heavily redacted tapes, Nixon is ordered to give up the tapes to investigators and Congress moves to impeach the president. Any possibility that Nixon might hang on disappears in August, when a previously unheard tape is released. The evidence is known as the Smoking Gun tape. On the tape Nixon is heard advising Haldeman to advise the CIA to stop the FBI from investigating the Watergate break-in: "When you get in these people, when you... get these people in, say: 'Look, the problem is that this will open the whole, the whole Bay of Pigs thing' [...] they should

"In just a few turbulent weeks Nixon had lost his three most trusted lieutenants and the head of the FBI"



## Who was Deep Throat?

Bob Woodward of *The Washington Post* knew a source at the FBI who fed him regular information. When the Watergate scandal broke, the source was in a perfect position to observe the presidency and resulting investigation. His source was Mark Felt, an associate director at the FBI. Woodward referred to him as 'My Friend' but the *Post's* editor, Howard Simons, renamed him 'Deep Throat' - a reference to a pornographic film of the time - to protect his identity.

The pseudonym fired the public imagination: Woodward would move a flowerpot on the balcony of his apartment when he desired a meeting; Felt would respond by leaving a time written on the journalist's daily newspaper. The pair would meet in an underground garage in Virginia.

The source fed information about the investigation to Woodward, revealing a complex web of deceit to bring down the president. Woodward and colleague Carl Bernstein protected Deep Throat's identity for 30 years before Felt outed himself in 2005, just three years before his death.


An emotional Nixon gives his farewell speech at the White House, August 1, 1974

"July 1973 brings with it a bombshell that Nixon instantly recognises as disastrous"

call the FBI in and say that we wish for the country, don't go any further into this case, period!"

Opinion is divided as to exactly what 'the Bay of Pigs thing' refers to, though the implication to the CIA is obvious - if they do not assist in the Watergate cover-up then sensitive information regarding the agency's role in the aborted CIA-backed invasion of Cuba in 1961 will be released by the White House. The tape constitutes authentic evidence that the president was involved in the Watergate cover-up and attempted to pressure federal agencies into participating in it.

Senior Republicans gather to tell Nixon that he has no support in Congress. Ever the political survivor and having claimed that he would never resign, even Nixon realises that he has exhausted all his options. The president promptly resigns, knowing full well that he will be impeached if he remains in office. His resignation speech is broadcast from the White House the night before he leaves for his home in California. Typically, his speech wrongfoots many, with allusions to the difficulties of office and oblique mentions of wrongdoing, notions of duty and vague expressions of regret.

Nixon also includes a lengthy summation of what he sees as his achievements in office, preferring them to discussions of Watergate - a trope that would become familiar in years to come. Nixon never escapes the taint of Watergate but he becomes a respected statesman on the American and global stages and wins acclaim for his domestic and foreign accomplishments. He is almost immediately pardoned by his successor, Gerald Ford, in a move that many decry.

Nixon avoids jail but the scale of wrongdoing - and the depth of the unpleasantness that modern US politics constitute - takes voters by surprise and reveals those at the top of government as venal, vulgar, deceitful and greedy. Most of all, it shows US presidents to be flawed and long after his resignation Nixon still inspires fascination.

Upon leaving the White House, Nixon spends most of his time at his house in California - driving to a small outhouse on his golf buggy every day to work on his memoirs. In 1977, short of cash and keen to rehabilitate his reputation, he agrees to the now-famous series of interviews with journalist David Frost. The trained lawyer and long-serving politician initially runs rings around the under-prepared Frost, but on the final day of interview the disgraced president finally opens up on the Watergate scandal: "I let down the country. I brought myself down. I gave them a sword and they stuck it in. And they twisted it with relish."

The former president may have admitted some culpability but he never shakes off his ardent belief that the ends justified the means. Nixon had relied on a range of dirty tricks - many illegal - to claim power, and then affect change as he saw it. The apparently insignificant burglary that brought down the 37th president of the United States was just one of the ways that he bent the law - it's just that this time, he got caught.




## The aftermath

Following his resignation Nixon cut a sorry figure. Inconsolable at losing the job he had coveted so deeply, wounded by the thought he had betrayed the American people and lost with little to do at his home in California, he quickly became ill and almost died. However, he worked to rehabilitate himself and by the time of his death was a respected political elder; sought after for his advice by sitting presidents and even former opponents like Hillary Clinton. When he died it was revealed that he had requested not to have a state funeral, as is the usual custom for deceased US presidents.

In his resignation speech, Nixon made much of the advances he thought had been made in foreign policy - where many US presidents believe their legacy will be judged. Opinions vary on his efforts here and Vietnam will always tarnish the reputation of Nixon and his predecessor, Lyndon B Johnson. However, Nixon's work at home is perhaps more impressive. He forged ahead with the desegregation of the South, created numerous environmental acts to protect the US ecology and steered a course that avoided the ideological impulses of following Republican presidents.

Nixon strikes a strange figure among US presidents - oddly awkward and self-aware, yet driven by a conviction that the president could not be wrong and that the interests of the ruling administration and United States were indivisible. He displayed the brooding character of someone bearing a great burden; his own self-image was laid bare in a quote from his resignation speech: "Sometimes I have succeeded and sometimes I have failed, but always I have taken heart from what Theodore Roosevelt once said about the man in the arena, 'whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood, who strives valiantly, who errs and comes short again and again because there is not effort without error and shortcoming, but who does actually strive to do the deed, who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions, who spends himself in a worthy cause, who at the best knows in the end the triumphs of high achievements and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly.'"




*1974 – 1977*

# Gerald Ford

## An unlikely candidate for the presidency, the Watergate scandal thrust Ford to the fore at a time of domestic and international instability

The Ford presidency, lasting just 895 days, is not a period many Americans remember with affection. As if the Watergate scandal was not sufficiently demoralising, they began feeling the pinch of economic uncertainty for the first time in a generation.

The long post-war boom faltered, confronting western economies with the simultaneous rise of unemployment and inflation. Meanwhile the longest war in American history came to a chaotic and sordid end under Ford's watch.

Vietnam had divided America like nothing else since the Civil War. But despite massive amounts of money, manpower and technology it ended in American humiliation, leaving a bill for $173 billion, added inflation, a generation of traumatised veterans and, in the national cemeteries, the graves of over 58,000 soldiers. Meanwhile for the devastated nations of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, a decade and a half of fighting had left two million dead and millions more maimed.

Taking power on 9 August 1974 after Richard Nixon resigned rather than face impeachment, Ford promptly pardoned his predecessor. It was a highly controversial decision and some of his political enemies speculated that the pardon had been part of a prearranged deal to reach the Oval Office.

He inherited much of Nixon's cabinet, including his secretary of state, Henry Kissinger. But he struggled with a Democrat-dominated Congress, vetoing 66 pieces of legislation that he felt clashed with his fiscally conservative outlook.

"If he saw a school kid who needed clothing, he'd give him the shirt off his back, literally," remarked

Jerald terHorst, his first press secretary as president. "Then he'd go right into the White House and veto a school lunch bill." But after 1968 he had been a Nixon loyalist, voting for policies he disliked such as federal wage and price controls. Thus after Spiro T Agnew resigned in October 1973 over charges of bribery and tax evasion - unrelated to Watergate - Ford was appointed vice president as per the president's executive prerogative.

Born Leslie Lynch King Jnr in Omaha, Nebraska in 1913, his parents divorced when he was less than a year old, his mother remarrying Gerald R Ford, whose name he took. An accomplished high school footballer, he attended the University of Michigan on an athletic scholarship. Having earned a degree in economics, he then studied law at Yale University.

During World War II Ford enlisted in the US Navy and served aboard an aircraft carrier. By 1948 he had been elected to the US House of Representatives; he would be re-elected to Congress 12 times in a row, always with more than 50 per cent of the vote.

From 1965 to 1973 he was House minority leader. He supported the Vietnam War and opposed Lyndon Johnson's 'War on Poverty.'

Ford's domestic policies were conditioned by a worsening economy: the federal budget ran a deficit every year of his presidency. Exacerbated by the oil crisis, unemployment reached nine per cent in 1975.

Ford considered inflation to be the more immediate threat to American living standards. In October 1974 he asked the public to 'WIN' (Whip Inflation Now) by making economies and spending less. Buttons were even issued to promote WIN which sceptics wore upside down: NIM stood for 'no immediate miracles.'

Ford's foreign policy record was undoubtedly overshadowed by the collapse of US-backed regimes in South Vietnam and Cambodia in April and May 1975.

Ironically, President Nguyen Van Thieu's regime had 1.1 million men under arms at the time of the 1973 Paris Peace Agreement. He also had a secret pledge that Washington would respond with "full force" should North Vietnam violate the agreement. The pledge came in the form of two letters, drafted by Kissinger and signed by Nixon, dated 14 November 1972 and 5 January 1973.

In early 1975 the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) launched 'Operation Ho Chi Minh' and dug deep into South Vietnamese territory within weeks.

When Congress learned of the letters in April 1975, it was furious that it had not been consulted. Ford was powerless to authorise air strikes or aid. By March, polls showed that 80 percent of Americans opposed further support for Thieu or his Cambodian counterpart, General Lon Nol.

By the morning of 28 April, NVA tanks were at the gates of Saigon. Operation Frequent Wind commenced: an audacious helicopter evacuation from the American embassy. Hours after the last chopper ascended from the embassy roof, NVA tanks cashed through the gates of the Presidential palace in Saigon.

But Ford was not quite finished in Indo-China. When the cargo vessel Mayaguez was captured off the Cambodian coast, Kissinger advised sending È Marines to recapture the ship. The 39 Mayaguez crew were rescued but 41 American military were killed in the operation.

Elsewhere, the Turkish invasion of Cyprus strained relations within the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation while disputes with Israel following the 1973 Yom Kippur war resulted in a cessation of aid through much of 1975.

> Ford was the United States' only unelected vice president and president. He was also the longest-lived

Ford also travelled to the Russian port of Vladivostok in November 1974 and signed a strategic nuclear arms control agreement with the Soviets. The following August, the United States was a signatory to the Helsinki Accords, which were designed to defuse Cold War tensions through a series of mutual agreements on trade, travel, security and human rights.

Ford was lucky to get the Republican nomination in August 1976, having beaten off a challenge by the former Governor of California, Ronald Reagan. But the Nixon pardon, Vietnam and the recession weighed heavily upon his record and he lost to Democrat Jimmy Carter.

In the years of his retirement, he skied, golfed and served as a director on the board of numerous companies. His autobiography *A Time to Heal* was published in 1979.

### Assassination attempt aftermath

Ford had already survived an assassination attempt when Oliver 'Billy' Sipple saved his life. On 5 September 1975, Lynette 'Squeaky' Fromme, an acolyte of the murderous cult leader Charles Manson, got within a few yards of Ford in Sacramento, California. Seventeen days later Sipple, a high school football star and Vietnam veteran, was walking past the St Francis Hotel as Ford emerged to a crowd. Spotting the mentally disturbed Sara Jane Moore about to pull a gun, Sipple wrestled her to the ground.

Sipple was gay, but had not come out. When his sexuality was disclosed, reportedly by the openly gay San Francisco politician Harvey Milk, there was no invite to the White House. Ford sent a short thank you note a few weeks later. But exposure traumatised Sipple who drifted into alcoholism and drug addiction, taking his life in 1989.



FORD TO CITY: DROP DEAD

Vows He'll Veto Any Bail-Out

The notorious Daily News headline after Ford turned down a request from the New York mayor for federal aid in 1975

## Life in the time of Gerald Ford

### Paranoia and nostalgia

Political corruption loomed large in the popular culture of the Ford years. Reflecting deep disillusionment over Vietnam and Watergate, movies like The *Godfather Part II* (1974), *Chinatown* (1974), *Jaws* (1975) and *Taxi Driver* (1976) feature corrupt and hypocritical authority figures. Television was more escapist with shows like *The Waltons* and *Happy Days* harking back to a folksy uncomplicated US, where the traumas of the 1960s and 70s were still in the future.

### Economic woes

The economic decline of the 1970s was epitomised by the bankruptcy of New York City, prompting the mayor Abraham Beame to apply for federal aid. A speech by Ford on 29 October 1975 refusing a bail out was infamously reported as 'Ford to City: Drop Dead' by the New York Daily News, but Ford never used those words.

### Vietnam amnesty

Between 1964 and 1973 over 210,000 men evaded the Vietnam draft. Famous cases included boxer Muhammad Ali, whose conviction was overturned. On 16 September 1974 Ford offered them a conditional amnesty: they had to reaffirm allegiance to the United States and do two years of public service.

### Emancipation of women

In 1975 *Time* magazine named 'American women' as its Person of the Year. The president and first lady were pro-choice after the landmark Roe vs Wade Supreme Court ruling in 1973 liberalised abortion laws in many states but also divided American opinion. In 1975 feminist journalist Susan Brownmiller published 'Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape' which attacked male defined views on sexual assault.

### Urban guerrillas

In the same month Ford survived two assassination attempts, the San Francisco police arrested newspaper heiress Patty Hearst, by then a member of the Symbionese Liberation Army - one of numerous groups committed to terrorism and urban warfare. She had apparently been turned over to their cause in the eighteen months since her kidnapping. In January 1975 the far-left Weathermen bombed the State Department building.



Since 2007 Carter has served as a member of 'The Elders', a group of independent world leaders who work to promote conflict resolution and human rights

39

**JIMMY CARTER**
**Democrat, 1924 - present**

**Brief Bio**
A naval officer and peanut farmer before turning to politics, Jimmy Carter sought reconciliation at home and abroad. Although much praised for his diplomatic and humanitarian work since leaving office, Carter's one-term presidency was assailed by numerous crises. The second great oil shock of the 1970s led to recession while his handling of the Iranian hostage crisis attracted much criticism.

*1977 – 1981*

# Jimmy Carter

## An outsider from Plains, Georgia, Carter sought an end to the imperial presidency at home and the promotion of human rights abroad

The presidency of Jimmy Carter illustrates the importance of good luck in any political career. The qualities he has employed in the decades since leaving office: tenacity, conviction and a sense of moral vision, have certainly stood to him as a negotiator in hotspots such as The Balkans, North Korea and the Middle East. The Carter Centre, a non-partisan, non-profit organisation which he set up in 1982 in conjunction with Emory University Atlanta, has sent over 100 electoral observation missions around the world.

The 2002 Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Carter "for his decades of untiring effort to find peaceful solutions to international conflicts, to advance democracy and human rights and to promote economic and social development." It has even been suggested that Carter was in office at the wrong time. Had he been confronted with Civil Rights or the Vietnam War, he might have excelled. But the late Seventies presented challenges that would have taxed any incumbent.

He arrived as an outsider in January 1977. Following his inauguration, Carter and first lady Rosalyn alighted from the presidential limousine and walked to the White House along Pennsylvania Avenue, much to the consternation of his security detail. This symbolised the end of the 'imperial presidency' of Johnson and Nixon. Carter promised reconciliation in a United States divided and demoralised by Vietnam and Watergate. He also promised to end economic mismanagement and sought to lead by example. The presidential yacht Sequoia was sold in 1977 and White House salaries were cut by 10 per cent. In the first six months of his presidency, Carter

personally reviewed all requests to use the White House tennis court.

Energy conservation was a key element of his policy platform. To emphasise the point, when Carter made the first of his televised "fireside chats" to the American public, he turned down the White House thermostats and wore a cardigan sweater. At the same time, Carter promoted unprecedented numbers of women and ethnic minorities to government jobs. The combination of high-minded idealism and personal rectitude did not always sit easily within an environment characterised by compromise, trade-offs and bargaining.

The Georgians Carter had brought to the White House, particularly his chief aid Hamilton Jordan, frequently clashed with the vice president, Walter Mondale and the liberal wing of the Democrats, led by Ted Kennedy. The latter wanted spending on social programs that clashed with the balanced budget Carter had promised. But Carter's style was a product of his rural, Baptist upbringing in America's deep south.

Carter has written 29 books, both fiction and non-fiction, and in 1982 he became university distinguished professor at Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia

The first American president to be born in a hospital, his mother 'Miss' Lillian was a trained nurse who joined the Peace Corps at age 68. Unusually for the time, black people who sought her advice were allowed into the house by the front door. The ancestors of his father Earl had arrived from 17th-century England.

Carter was a cadet at the US Naval Academy from 1943-46 and upon graduating married Rosalyn Smith, a friend of his sister Ruth. In 1948, having finished third out of 52 seamen in the Navy's submarine program, he was assigned to the nuclear submarine Sea Wolf. When Earl Carter died five years later, Jimmy resigned his commission and returned to Georgia to rescue the family farm and peanut brokerage. He threw himself into farming but Rosalyn found the adjustment from military life punishing.

Carter became a church deacon and Sunday school teacher at the Plains Baptist Church. Faith was integral to his political maturation. It guided his decision, at the risk of his business being boycotted, not to join the White Citizens Council, set up in opposition to the Supreme Court's ruling on school integration in 1954.

He ran successfully for a seat on Sumter County Board of Education and served two terms in the Senate during the 1960s. In 1966 he was defeated in the gubernatorial primary by the segregationist Lester Maddox.

Four years later, however he was elected governor of Georgia with 49 per cent of the vote. Carter was nationally unknown when he announced his campaign. The near obliteration of the liberal George McGovern in the 1972 presidential election convinced him that the Democrats needed a centrist approach. Thus he worked the primary system to gain the 1976 Democratic nomination: his victory was narrow, gaining 40.8 million votes and 297 electoral votes to Gerald Ford's 39.1 million and 240 votes.

As President he created the departments of Energy and Education and promoted reform of the civil service. Under Carter, the dumping of raw sewage in the oceans was banned and controls placed on strip mining. The airline and trucking industries were deregulated. His administration moved right-ward in its final year, cutting social spending and raising the defence budget.

In his foreign policy, Carter advocated promoting human rights but the posture of his national security advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski was that of an ardent Cold Warrior over conflicts in Indonesia, Afghanistan, Cambodia and Latin America.

His administration established full diplomatic relations with China, but then imposed a boycott on the 1980 Moscow Olympics when the Soviets invaded Afghanistan. In September 1978 Carter facilitated a meeting between Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and Egyptian President Anwar Sadat at the retreat of Camp David, Maryland. This resulted in an agreement wherein Israel agreed to withdraw troops from the occupied Sinai Peninsula and the state of war between both nations ended. However, his handling of the Iranian hostage crisis fatally damaged his credibility in an election year.

Few presidents have been so conspicuous on the world stage since leaving office. Now in his nineties, Carter is often feted as one of America's greatest ex-presidents.

## The Iran Hostage Crisis

Ronald Reagan was taking the oath of the office when the biggest disaster of Carter's administration ended. After 444 days of captivity, 52 American hostages, seized in the chaos of Iran's Islamic Revolution, returned home.

Vast crowds had welcomed the ageing Shi'ite cleric Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini to the capital of Tehran in February 1979 after a long exile in Paris. Committed to establishing a new order based on strict Islamic principles, he was fiercely resentful of the United States and the West in general.

On 4 November 1979, thousands of Iranians stormed the US embassy in Tehran, a 27-acre parkland complex comprising 20 city blocks. The previous month Carter had allowed the exiled and terminally ill Shah to enter the United States for medical treatment. The blindfolded hostages, paraded before television cameras, became a focus for anger towards Carter, perceived as inept and feeble. Criticism became particularly sharp following the debacle of Operation Eagle Claw in April 1980, wherein helicopters and C-130 aircraft were poised to stage an audacious rescue mission within Iran itself. Two days before Reagan's electoral victory, an agreement was reached to unfreeze Iranian assets and the hostages were released.

Throughout his time in office, Carter's dealings with Iran drew heated criticism

# Life in the time of Jimmy Carter

## Volcker's shock therapy

Americans felt the pain of rising oil prices in the form of an economic malady called 'stagflation.' Inflation went over 10 per cent in 1979-80. The newly appointed chairman of the Federal Reserve Paul Volcker responded with the 'shock therapy' of jacking up interest rates above 20 per cent. Unemployment reached double digits in some areas.

## Gay rights movement

After decades underground, homosexuality was increasingly visible. Harvey Milk became America's first openly gay politician to be elected to office, winning a seat on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors in 1977. His murder by the mentally disturbed Dan White, another city supervisor, and the relatively lenient sentence given to White provoked riots in San Francisco in May 1979.

## Space exploration

Although the heady days of the Apollo Moon missions were over, the National Aeronautics Space Agency (NASA) was pushing further afield. In 1976 Viking I became the first spacecraft to land on Mars. The following year Voyager I and II began their tour of the solar system. Both probes contained records with a myriad of images and sounds from Earth. These included a greeting from President Carter, intended for any extraterrestrials who might encounter the spacecraft.

## Protecting the environment

Concerns over environmental destruction became particularly acute following a partial meltdown at the Three Mile Island nuclear station at Dauphin County, Pennsylvania, in March 1979, which adversely affected American attitudes towards nuclear energy. Carter expanded America's national park system, including protection of Alaska, promoted solar energy and passed laws to clean up polluted locations.

## Nuclear war fear

Carter followed Nixon and Ford in negotiating the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT II) which limited the development of strategic nuclear delivery systems. Although signed by Carter and his Soviet counterpart Leonid Brezhnev in June 1979, the treaty was not ratified by the US Senate due to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan later that year.

## 1981 – 1989

# Ronald Reagan

### After two troubled decades, Americans sought a president to restore confidence in themselves and the country – and Ronald Reagan delivered

The plot of the 1967 film *In Like Flint* involves an imposter replacing the president of the United States. Secret agent Derek Flint, played by James Coburn, uncovers the truth that a nefarious stand-in has been playing the part of the leader of the free world. "An actor? As president?" Flint gasps in astonished incredulity.

Barely 13 years later, the US voted for Ronald Reagan, a former Hollywood star and TV performer, as the 40th president of the country. It was an unlikely previous occupation for a resident of the White House, yet he proved to be an extraordinary leader.

Born in Tampico, Illinois in 1911, Ronald Wilson Reagan's immediate family consisted of alcoholic father John (known as Jack), older brother Neil, and nurturing, compassionate mother Nelle. She taught her boys not to blame their father as alcoholism was a disease. It impacted upon everyone, however, in that the Reagan family had to move frequently for Jack to find work. They finally settled in Dixon, Illinois in 1920, where Reagan's father sold shoes.

Following high school graduation, Jack's youngest enrolled in Eureka College, Illinois. He majored in economics and sociology, and while only average academically, he excelled in sport and drama. Tellingly perhaps, he was elected class president in his senior year.

Reagan first found work as a radio sports reporter in Davenport, Iowa, soon progressing to a similar post with larger station, WHO, in Des Moines. His coverage of the Chicago Cubs baseball team proved popular in the state - and also kick-started his acting career.

In 1937, while following the Cubs to a training camp in California, the budding reporter also arranged to make a screen test at Warner Brothers studios. Tall, athletic, good-looking, and with an impressive speaking voice, Reagan landed a $200 per week contract.

He appeared mostly in films regarded not as features but as B-movies. Frequently he played wholesome, easy-going 'good guy' characters who were, many have noted, rather like himself. In the relaxed, self-mocking manner that served him so well in his political career, Reagan later explained the studio "didn't want the films good, they wanted them Thursday."

**At the age of 69, Reagan was the oldest man to become the US president until Trump's election in 2016**

Critics and himself regarded his best film as *King's Row*. Yet any hopes Reagan had of building on that 1942 release were curtailed by the war. A US Army cavalry reserve since the 1930s, in the wake of Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, Reagan was called to active service. Eyesight problems meant he wasn't suitable for combat duty but his talents were put to use in the military's first motion picture unit narrating training films and appearing in patriotic movies to aid the war effort. He had married actress Jane Wyman by then, too. Their first child, Maureen, was born in 1941, and a second, Michael, was adopted in 1945, but the marriage ended in divorce four years later.



**40**

**RONALD REAGAN**
**Republican, 1911 – 2004**

**Brief Bio**

Raised in a poor family, Reagan followed a reasonably successful acting career with a stunningly successful political one. He was once a Democrat who later became an icon of Republican conservatives. Affable by nature, he nevertheless heightened the Cold War with provocative rhetoric before negotiating arms reductions. Above all, he made a previously uncertain America feel good about itself again.



Nancy and Ronald Reagan aboard a boat in California in 1964

# Life in the time of Ronald Reagan

## Cue VT

With the words, "Ladies and gentlemen, rock and roll," MTV was launched on 1 August 1981, kick-starting a revolution in the music industry. The first music video shown on the channel was 'Video Killed The Radio Star', by British recording duo The Buggles.

## Car wars

The DeLorean gull-winged sports car launched on the American market in the early 1980s - with the car industry in its biggest slump for decades. The company went bankrupt in 1982, though the car later featured as a time machine in the Back To The Future trilogy.

## Armageddon almost by accident

The world came dangerously close to destruction in 1983. With Cold War tensions high, US and NATO forces began a wargame exercise called Able Archer '83. The Soviet Union, fearing a a surprise attack might be instigated under such a premise, mobilised its nuclear forces and came close to launching.

## Sport and politics

The Moscow Olympics in 1980 were boycotted by many countries included the United States. Four years later, the Soviet Union and others boycotted the Los Angeles Olympics. The Goodwill Games, introduced in 1986, attempted to break the cycle. Moscow hosted first, Seattle four years later, and there were three further tournaments.

## Disaster in the skies

Space Shuttle Challenger began its tenth mission in January 1986. Among its seven astronauts was school teacher Christa McAuliffe, due to give lessons from space. Seconds into the mission, the Shuttle exploded, killing all on board. Reagan addressed the nation that evening to pay a moving tribute to the lost astronauts.

## Making nuclear weapons obsolete

Rather than trust that the volume of nuclear weapons of both superpowers would prevent war because of mutually assured destruction, Reagan seized on the notion of a Strategic Defence Initiative. He charged the scientific community with creating a system largely deployed in space to shoot down missiles launched at the United States. Research and development costs would be enormous, while such a system risked breaching existing weapons control treaties and instigating a new arms race.
The economy of the Soviet Union, meanwhile, was in a parlous state, particularly after the price of its main export oil plummeted. Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev was introducing reforms promising greater freedom and sought negotiations with Reagan. The two leaders met four times.

The second summit in Iceland began with low expectations but progressed rapidly, Gorbachev eventually offering to eliminate all nuclear weapons within a decade if the Americans would confine SDI research to laboratories. Reagan, however, would not give up on SDI and such an historic agreement was never made, even though a later summit produced a treaty eliminating intermediate-range nuclear forces. Years later, with SDI as originally conceived proving difficult to achieve, defence systems were downgraded to earth-based theatre, not national, levels.



Reagan and Soviet Union leader Mikhail Gorbachev sign the Intermediate-Rang Nuclear Forces Treaty in 1987

Reagan was first elected president of the Screen Actors Guild, the union for film and television performers, in 1947. He served as its leader for a further five years. They were turbulent times in the movie industry because of investigations by the House of Un-American Activities Committee into left-wing politics in Hollywood. Strongly anti-communist, Reagan fought other movie unions he felt were under communist influence, testified as a friendly witness to the HUAC, and was an FBI informant on suspected Hollywood leftist sympathisers. The blacklist of performers, writers and directors prevented from working for major studios because of their political views subsequently numbered more than 300.

During this period, Reagan's own politics were shifting. He had been a liberal, Democratic Roosevelt supporter but was becoming more conservative. Meeting actress Nancy Davis, who had views similar to her right-wing adoptive father, only accelerated the process. The pair married in 1952.

The movie offers were drying up, but in 1954 Reagan landed a TV job as presenter and occasional performer for General Electric Theatre, a drama series which became a staple of Sunday night viewing. Part of his role was to visit the sponsor company's plants, giving talks to its employees. Over the years, this exposure to 'business America' convinced the actor that big government hindered rather than helped enterprise, pushing him further towards the political right, while the talks helped hone his speech construction and delivery skills.

> During his second term as governor of California, Reagan granted country singer Merle Haggard a full pardon from his past crimes

Reagan's acting career was a success, but few predicted he would eventually land the presidency

After campaigning with Democrats-for-Eisenhower to vote the Republican to the White House in 1952 and 1956, Reagan supported the Grand Old Party's Richard Nixon against John F Kennedy, finally registering as a Republican in 1962. As such, he championed the party's 1964 conservative presidential candidate, Barry Goldwater. In the last week of the campaign, Reagan presented "A Time for Choosing," a 30-minute nationally televised address, considered to be one of the finest political endorsements ever made.

Although Goldwater lost, Reagan rocketed to pre-eminence on the Republican right.

The next move was to seek office himself. Against Democrat incumbent 'Pat' Brown, Reagan ran for governor of California in 1966. Brown tried discrediting his opponent as an inexperienced lightweight, but Reagan flipped the accusations, arguing he was an ordinary citizen fed up with

### *Defining moment*

**A true soulmate**

**4 March 1952**

After numerous film appearances, and a divorce, Reagan marries actress Nancy Davis. She claims her life only really begins after her marriage, which produces two children, Patricia and Ronald. The couple are devoted to each other, remaining deeply in love for the rest of their lives. Reagan's personal politics have begun to shift, in part through Nancy, in part due to his position as president of the Screen Actors Guild, and in part because of his exposure to the business world brought about by his role as presenter of TV's General Electric Theatre



## *Timeline*

1911

**Humble Beginnings**
Reagan is born in Tampico, Illinois. When the family settle in Dixon, his alcoholic father becomes a shoe salesman.
**6 February 1911**

**Hollywood Beckons**
Reagan begins working as a radio sports reporter and is soon broadcasting on Chicago Cubs baseball games. Covering the team takes him to California, where he makes a successful screen test.
**1932-1937**



**New career**
A nationwide TV appearance endorsing Republican presidential candidate Barry Goldwater brings in $1 million worth of support. Goldwater loses, but Reagan's profile as a prominent politician is firmly established.
**27 October 1964**

**Time to govern**
Reagan is elected governor of California, serving two terms. Untypically, he sanctions record tax increases to tackle a budget deficit and achieves some notable environmental success. Controversially uses the National Guard to quell student unrest.
**1796**

**Out of office**
Reagan bides his time giving speeches and writing a weekly newspaper column before announcing he wishes to seek the Republican Party presidential nomination. He comfortably secures it.
**13 November 1979**

**The White House beckons**
He is sworn in as the 40th president following a resounding election victory the previous November over Jimmy Carter. He advocates supply-side economic reforms which quickly become known as 'Reagonomics'.
**20 January 1981**

remote and inefficient state government. This appealed to voters, who also warmed to Reagan's affable personality. He won convincingly, securing a second term four years later.

A half-hearted tilt at the Republican presidential nomination failed in 1968. A more serious challenge to Gerald Ford - president after Nixon's resignation - followed eight years later. That failed too, but when Ford lost to Jimmy Carter, Reagan was the obvious choice to secure the GOP nomination in 1980. He resoundingly defeated President Carter, confidently asserting that he could rebuild the nation's economy and spirit - badly tarnished after Vietnam, the Watergate scandal, and the Iran hostage crisis - with sweeping tax cuts, increased defence spending, less government interference, and a balanced federal budget.

The American hostages in Iran were released the day Reagan was inaugurated, but that auspicious start was abruptly halted when John Hinckley Jr attempted to assassinate the new President in early 1981. With a bullet lodged in Reagan's body just millimetres from his heart, he was rushed to hospital. When Nancy arrived, her husband told her, "Honey, I forgot to duck." Just before undergoing surgery, he removed his oxygen mask, enquiring of the staff, "I hope you are all Republicans." Reagan's survival of the attack and his endearing quips made his popularity soar.

His language was hawkishly tough, however, when confronting the Soviet Union. Reagan dubbed it "an evil empire", escalating the Cold War with his increased military spending. A further step came in 1983 when the president announced the country would develop the Strategic Defence Initiative. Labelled "Star Wars" by critics, the system called for space-based technologies to intercept and destroy nuclear missiles launched at the United States.

Some contended this was a dangerous escalation of the arms race that would create a black hole in the military budget. In later years, however, others say pressures created by the SDI helped end the Cold War and pushed the Soviet Union into collapse, as its increasingly unstable economy was incapable of competing with such US military expansion.

With the economy booming again, a landslide second election victory was achieved in 1984. After Brezhnev, Andropov and Chernenko, a fourth Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, came to power during Reagan's presidency. Unlike the previous three, Gorbachev signalled he was prepared to negotiate with the US President, whose bellicose language began to soften during his second term. From a position of strength following military expansion, Reagan's discussions with Gorbachev on limiting the nuclear arsenal of both super powers bore fruit. Historic agreements on strategic arms reductions were signed, though some contend more could have been achieved had Reagan not been so steadfastly wedded to SDI.

**In his 1984 re-election, Reagan won more electoral college votes - 525 out of 538 - than any other president in history**

While the economy continued expanding during Reagan's second term, there were increases to the budget deficit and the national debt, yet neither harmed his popularity. What did was the Iran-Contra Affair. American hostages were being held in Lebanon by groups friendly to Iran. Despite a policy of not dealing with terrorists, between 1985 and 1986, arms were shipped to Iran in exchange for hostage releases and payments. Later, some of the payments were diverted to the Contras of Nicaragua who were fighting to overthrow the country's socialist government, even though such funding was outlawed by Congress. It remains unclear how much the president knew about the Affair, but he did apologise to the nation for it, tarnishing his image. Nevertheless, on leaving office, Reagan had the highest presidential approval ratings since Roosevelt.

Five years after exiting the White House, Reagan was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. Despite periods in his last years in office when he appeared confused, with Nancy occasionally stepping forward to prompt his answers before the press, his doctors insisted he did not have the illness when serving.

The degenerative disease curtailed his public appearances in later life. He died aged 93 in 2004. Although the image of a rider-less horse following the carriage carrying his coffin, with Reagan's own riding boots reversed in the stirrups, seemed pure Hollywood for the former actor, it has been seen at state funerals for other former Presidents who were, like Ronald Reagan, venerated by the nation.

"Reagan dubbed the Soviet Union an 'evil empire', escalating the Cold War"

## *Defining moment*

### Assassination attempt
### 30 March 1981

Leaving the Washington Hilton Hotel, the president and three others are hit by a hail of bullets fired by John Hinckley Jr. Reagan is rushed to hospital and undergoes emergency surgery. He survives, the first president to do so after being shot in an assassination attempt. His popularity skyrockets. Hinckley, obsessed with the actress Jodie Foster, sought to impress her by emulating a character from her film *Taxi Driver* who makes an assassination attempt. Charged with attempting to assassinate the president, Hinckley is found not guilty by reason of insanity and is confined to a psychiatric institution

## *Defining moment*

### Last day
### 20 January 1989

Reagan retires from the White House. Four successful summits with Soviet leader Gorbachev have paved the way for a peaceful resolution to the Cold War. Not all foreign policy ventures have been successful, though. The Iran-Contra Affair in particular has been shambolic, even down to how much the president knew or didn't know about it. At home, there are mixed economic outcomes too. Inflation is down and under control and there has been extensive growth, yet the budget deficit has deepened while the national debt has soared. Without doubt, however, the president leaves office a popular and highly regarded figure



Reagan delivers his famous speech in front of the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin, in which he appealed to Gorbachev to "tear down this wall"



**Reach for the stars**
Reagan unveils his proposal for a Strategic Defence Initiative to protect the US from attack by nuclear missiles with space-based systems. Critics call it "Star Wars" and claim it is unfeasible.
**23 March 1983**

**Four more years**
After declaring it was "Morning again in America" during the campaign because of the resurgent economy, he secures a second term as president with the largest ever electoral college victory.
**4 November 1984**

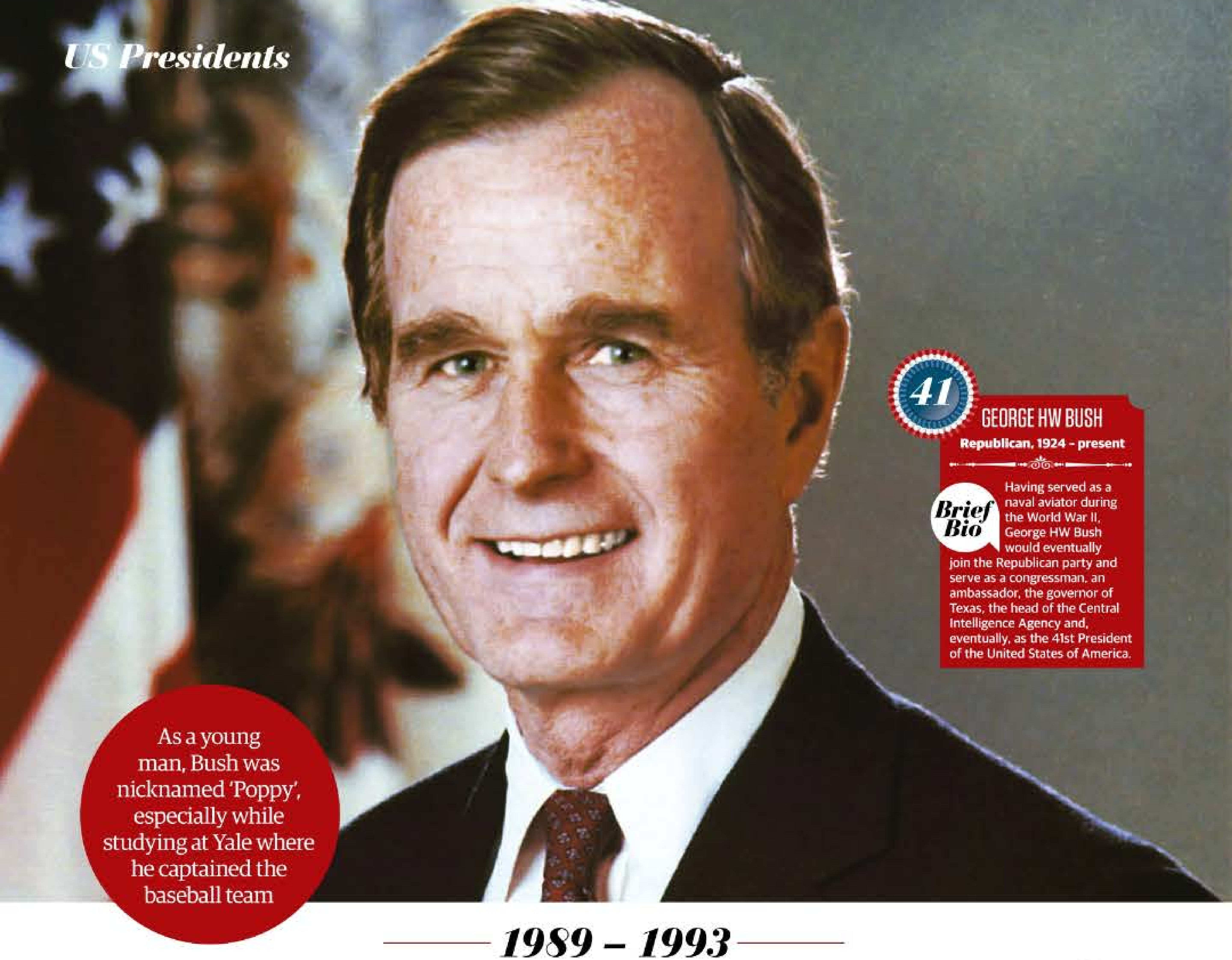
**Iconic speech**
Reagan visits the Berlin Wall's Brandenburg Gate. Superpower summits have been productive but he challenges the Soviet Union to go further with reforms, urging, "Mr Gorbachev, tear down this wall!"
**12 June 1987**

**No Sir!**
Reagan is awarded an honorary knighthood by Queen Elizabeth II. It is the highest honour Britain can bestow upon a foreign national, though he cannot be referred to as Sir.
**14 June 1989**

**Incurable illness**
After appearing in public for the last time at Richard Nixon's funeral earlier in the year, Reagan discloses in an open letter to the American people that he has Alzheimer's disease.
**5 November 1994**

2004

**The curtain comes down**
At the age of 93, Reagan dies of pneumonia complicated by Alzheimer's at his Bel Air home in California.
**5 June 2004**



41

GEORGE HW BUSH

**Republican, 1924 - present**

**Brief Bio**

Having served as a naval aviator during the World War II, George HW Bush would eventually join the Republican party and serve as a congressman, an ambassador, the governor of Texas, the head of the Central Intelligence Agency and, eventually, as the 41st President of the United States of America.

As a young man, Bush was nicknamed 'Poppy', especially while studying at Yale where he captained the baseball team

## 1989 – 1993

# George HW Bush

The last living president to have served during WWII, George HW Bush is the elder statesman at the head of one of the US's most influential political families

Born into a wealthy family on 12 June 1924, George Herbert Walker Bush was already a part of legacy well versed in the minutia of military service and politics. His father, Prescott Bush, had served as a captain during World War I and had gone on to serve as a US senator. The second of five children, the young Bush attended the super-elite preparatory school Phillips Academy where he excelled both socially and academically, captaining varsity teams and holding a variety of leadership positions.

It was here, in 1941, that Bush met a young Barbara Pierce, the woman who would remain at his side for decades to come. A year later, on his 18th birthday, Bush followed in his father's footsteps a joined the military, opting for the US Navy. He became the youngest ever naval aviator at the time, and flew a total of 58 combat missions during World War II.

After the war, Bush married his fiancée Barbara, graduated from Yale with a degree in economics and moved to Texas (with son, and future president, George Jr in tow) where he made his mark in oil refinery. However, his attention soon turned to politics. He became chairman of the Harris County Republican Party by 1963, but

failed in his attempts to gain a seat in the Senate on behalf of Texas. This knockback, and the one that followed the year after, didn't dissuade him and he eventually earned a seat in the House of Representatives in 1966.

His political career then began to bloom. His no-nonsense and direct demeanour, mixed with his family name, his experience as a war veteran and his influence as a former oil magnate made him a formidable force as he served as the US ambassador to the United Nations and headed up the Republican National Committee during President Nixon's Watergate scandal. His political ascendance even saw him assume the post of director of the CIA in 1976.

But by the end of the 1970s, Bush's attention had moved to the highest office of all: the presidency. His attempt to win the Republican nomination in 1980 wasn't to be, losing out to charismatic former Hollywood star Ronald Reagan, but his campaign made a big impact and Reagan selected him as vice president. The pairing proved successful and Bush served two full terms as vice president.

His own presidential campaign (1987-1988), took a far more proactive and aggressive tone than his previous effort, and his renewed vigour ultimately struck a chord - although Bush's victory wasn't a landslide, with the Republican taking 54.4% of the popular vote. Slim margin or not, Bush was in and he became the first serving vice president to be elected president since Martin Van Buren in 1836, and the first president to succeed someone from his own party since Herbert Hoover in 1929.

Sworn into office on 20 January 1989, Bush assumed the presidency at a time of dramatic change for the Western world, most notably the destabilisation of the Soviet Union. The Cold War that had silently raged for decades had petered out and Soviet states were finally transforming into democratic territories once more. In the face of such events, it's no surprise that Bush's administration would focus a great deal of its attention on foreign policy and the United States' relationship with the changing world.

> As well as flying 58 combat missions, Bush was awarded three Air Medals and the Distinguished Flying Cross

Bush began a dialogue with liberal Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, and between them Russo-American relations improved significantly. The two would form something of a political power couple on the global stage and the signing of the Soviet Arms Reduction Treaty in July 1991 typified this new strategy of cooperation.

Another significant factor that defined Bush's time in office was the Gulf War. When the Iraqi military invaded Kuwait in January 1991, it thrust the world's oil resources into crisis. With infamous Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein now in control of these oil fields illegally, Bush and his administration had to act. Shortly after, Congress sanctioned the use of military force. Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm saw US forces drive out the Iraqi occupation and liberate Kuwait.

The liberation of Kuwait (and, of course, its precious oil reserves) sent Bush's approval ratings through the roof - but for all his successes in foreign policy, his domestic administration brought him no end of ridicule. The United States' economy was in recession, mainly due to sluggish job recovery across the nation, and while this economic downturn wasn't necessarily the fault of the Bush administration, it still left a significant proportion of the American population feeling vulnerable and disillusioned.

When Bush actively raised taxes (after, rather ironically, using the slogan, "Read my lips: no new taxes," as one of the tenets of his presidential campaign) in order to deal with the worsening budget deficit, his popularity ultimately plummeted. Even his successes overseas couldn't repair the damage and Bush lost his seat in the 1993 presidential elections to the popular Democrat Bill Clinton.

After serving a single term as president, Bush proudly watched his son George W Bush assume the presidency in 2000, while his other son Jeb became governor of Florida between 1999 and 2007. Now in his nineties and still going strong, the elder Bush continues his philanthropy, working with charities across the US to raise money for countless good causes.

### The US invasion of Panama

During the 1980s, Panamanian leader Manuel Noriega (who had previously been openly pro-US) had been smuggling drugs from his nation into the US. When a democratic election ousted him from power he nullified the vote and reassumed control. In response, Bush sent 2,000 American troops into Panama (Operation Just Cause) to settle the growing unrest under Noriega's de facto government. The leader had been an issue for Reagan's administration, but the Republican president had been unable to find a solution. Under Bush's presidency, Noriega was removed from office and power was granted back to the rightful winner of the election, Guillermo Endara.






Bush's long list of political appointments, including being director of the CIA, made him a popular candidate for the presidency

## Life in the time of George HW Bush

### Somali strife

In the early 1990s African state Somalia descended into a devastating civil war, which plunged the country towards a humanitarian crisis. In April 1994, the United Nations attempted to aid the situation, but the mission failed. The war continued through Bush's administration and into Bill Clinton's.

### Into the light

Bush established the Point Of Light Award, an affectation of the Points Of Light movement, which aimed to promote the spirit of volunteerism in local communities. The award itself was created to recognise those that went above and beyond in the name of helping their fellow Americans. In 2013, the 5,000th award was granted.

### Berlin united

In the same year Bush finally ascended to the office of the president, the world around his new administration was changing drastically. The crumbling of the Soviet Union saw East and West Berlin - divided for over three decades - united as one.

### Soviet Union disbanded

In December 1991, the prime and first ministers of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus signed the Belavezha Accords which deemed the Soviet Union dissolved. A Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) was established in its place.

### Flood damage

Between April and October 1993, the United States suffered its worst recorded flooding in the history of the country. It occurred in the American Midwest along the Mississippi and Missouri rivers and caused a staggering $15 billion in damages across agriculture, property and more.




In 1992, Clinton was accused of draft dodging during the Vietnam War

**BILL CLINTON**

**Democrat, 1946 - present**

**Brief Bio**

Bill Clinton's presidency came at a time of relative stability in United States history and his government oversaw a booming economy and progressive welfare reforms. Although the Democrat's time was nevertheless marked by scandal, particularly during his second term, he left with the highest end-of-office approval rating of any American president since World War II.

*1993 – 2001*

# Bill Clinton

## Calling himself 'The Comeback Kid', Bill Clinton's reign was tainted by scandal but it was impossible to keep him down

With the phrase, "It's the economy, stupid," ringing in the ears of the American electorate, Bill Clinton found himself the victor in the 1992 presidential campaign against President George HW Bush. The phrase hammered home the message that the economy was the most important electoral issue and, during Clinton's subsequent term, the United States' economy prospered. But it was to be just one of a number of things that would mark his eight roller-coaster years in office.

Bill Clinton was born William Jefferson Blythe in the tiny town of Hope, Arkansas, on 19 August 1946. He was raised alone by his mother, Virginia Cassidy Blythe; his father had died in a car crash three months before Clinton was born. With his mother studying for a nursing degree in New Orleans, the young boy was raised by his grandparents Eldridge and Edith Cassidy. His mother married Roger Clinton in 1950 and although the used car salesman was a gambler and an alcoholic prone to violence, the future president nevertheless officially adopted his stepfather's surname at the age of 15.

During his formative years, Clinton had shown deep intelligence. He graduated from Georgetown University, won a Rhodes Scholarship to Oxford

## The Lewinsky scandal

When former Arkansas state employee Paula Jones sued Clinton for sexual harassment, her lawyers went on to subpoena White House intern Monica Lewinsky, another woman with whom Clinton was suspected of having an affair. Clinton denied a sexual relationship twice in January 1998 saying, "I did not have sexual relations with that woman". But Lewinsky, who also initially said the accusations were false, testified before the Starr commission and admitted nine encounters. Clinton, meanwhile, denied the affair under oath. It led to an impeachment trial in the Senate in December 1998 but in February the following year he was found not guilty on the charges of perjury and obstruction of justice.



University and studied law at Yale until 1973. But controversially, he was also questioned about his drug use at Oxford, responding infamously: "When I was in England, I experimented with marijuana a time or two, and didn't like it... I didn't inhale, and I didn't try it again." On the positive side, he met an ambitious, smart woman called Hillary Rodham at Yale and the couple married in 1975.

By the time the couple had a daughter, Chelsea, in 1980, the Democratic Party member had already served two years - from 3 January 1977 to 9 January 1979 - as the 50th attorney general of Arkansas. He had only just begun his first of two split terms as the 40th and 42nd governor of Arkansas too, the second of which ended on 12 December 1992.

But Clinton was destined for greater things and his reputation was growing. He followed a progressive brand of politics, which was part and parcel of a New Democrat, centrist faction ideology that had emerged following George HW Bush's victory in 1988. He firmly believed in the need to improve the quality of public education. In 1992, he had won his party's nomination, running for president on a promise of welfare reform, a tax cut for the middle classes and an expansion of the Earned Income Tax Credit for the working poor.

His campaign was marred by claims of an affair by nightclub singer Gennifer Flowers yet with Clinton and his running mate Al Gore successfully in the White House, public attention turned firmly to politics. Clinton focused his work on economic reforms that would drag the US out of the recession that had blighted Bush's later years.

There were some positive standout moments including the so-called 'Don't ask, don't tell' law in 1993 which replaced an outright ban on gay people serving in the military and prohibited discrimination. That same year, Israel's prime minister Yitzhak Rabin shook hands with the Palestine Liberation Organisation's Yasser Arafat following the signing of the Oslo Accords. An agreement was also ratified in 1994 by the US, Canada and Mexico which created a trade bloc and eliminated barriers to investment.

But reform of the US healthcare system had to be scrapped and it was a bitter blow. First lady Hillary Clinton had been put in charge of spearheading the proposal - unofficially nicknamed Hillarycare - and the president had hoped to see it through. He yearned for universal health care and made it part of his presidential campaign but strong opposition and red tape strangled it. Following that, the midterm elections in 1994 saw the Republican Party make a net gain of 54 seats in the House of Representatives and pick up eight seats in the Senate. The Republican Revolution saw the party win both houses of Congress.

It did not prevent Clinton from winning re-election in 1996. He became the first Democrat since Franklin D Roosevelt to win a second term, beating Republican Party nominee Bob Dole. Applauded for raising the national minimum wage, he clamped down on crime and became the first serving US president to visit Northern Ireland, telling his hosts the two countries were "partners for security, partners for prosperity, and most [importantly], partners for peace." Unemployment also fell to its lowest levels and the economy boomed. Yet further trouble brewed in his personal life and his second term was marked by the scandal involving White House intern Monica Lewinsky. It led to the president's impeachment (and later acquittal), which blemished his reputation.

> Jazz fan Clinton began to play the saxophone aged nine and would play for 12 hours a day

His final years of presidency saw a rise in his popularity with the signing of tax-relief plans, tax credits for children and college tuition, and the announcement of a $70 billion budget surplus. But world tensions began to simmer and he oversaw a United States-led, two-month NATO bombardment of Serbia in support of the Albanians. He also warned in 1998 that Iraq was pursuing nuclear weapons, prompting four days of concentrated air attacks on Iraqi military installations. He may have taken office after the end of the Cold War but the United States' brief time of peace was coming to an end. Clinton left office on 20 January 2001.



Clinton meets with President Jimmy Carter during his time as governor of Arkansas

## Life in the time of Bill Clinton

### A changing Europe

Although the Cold War was over, many European borders were being redrawn in the east, particularly due to the Yugoslav Wars, the Kosovo War and the Bosnian War. Many countries were also shifting away from the influence of the former Soviet Union. The political landscape was shifting and the United States' standing was strengthened.

### Prosperous times in the US

The American economy was flourishing in the Nineties, experiencing the longest period of peacetime economic expansion in its history. The US had more than overcome the recession at the turn of the decade and the Welfare Reform Act also succeeded in reducing poverty from 1996.

### Dawn of the Internet

Around 1995, the Internet really began to take off, three years after the first photo on the World Wide Web was published by its inventor, English scientist Tim Berners-Lee (he had also written the first web browser in 1990). The internet was proving to be revolutionary with email a popular form of communication.

### Blair's rise to power

It is said that the progressive politics of Bill Clinton were mimicked by Tony Blair who became prime minister of the United Kingdom in 1997, following a landslide victory against the previously ruling Conservative Party. The UK and Ireland signed the Good Friday peace agreement in 1998.

### Booming entertainment and high-profile cases

The 1990s saw the release of the first *Star Wars* prequel while animation moved up a notch with the debut of *Toy Story*. Punk rock flourished in California and nu metal became influential. Footballer and actor OJ Simpson fell from grace, accused of the double-murder of his ex-wife Nicole Brown Simpson and her friend Ronald Goldman.

2001 – 2009

# George W Bush

## Bush's time in office was marked by the terrorist attacks on the United States which led to the global War on Terror

It is video footage which has been seen many times over and yet it still manages to stay in the minds of those who view it. On the day Al-Qaeda terrorists flew two hijacked aeroplanes into the World Trade Center in New York, the White House chief of staff, Andrew Card, was filmed whispering into the ear of George W Bush in front of schoolchildren. That day also saw another plane blasted into the Pentagon and control of United Airlines Flight 93 seized - both were acts by Al-Qaeda - only for Flight 93 to crash in a field in Pennsylvania after its brave passengers attempted to overcome the terrorists.

The president listened intently for the few seconds it took for the message to be delivered, his face barely flickering as the news cameras focused upon him. He was reading a book to schoolchildren in Florida and, after the news was delivered, he continued to read for a few more minutes, stood up, apologised and left. But for those brief moments, he was a picture of calm on an otherwise hectic and uncertain day.

September 11 is the day which would define the 43rd president's time in office. He had only been leader for eight months when 9/11 - as it became known - happened in 2001, and he barely had the opportunity to make his mark. But from that moment on, he led the global War on Terror. He positioned himself as the head of the coalition of the willing - a group of allied countries uniting against terrorism - and he formed the Department of Homeland Security. The US was plunged into two long military campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq, which split the opinion of its citizens. There was no denying Bush's impact.

> Bush and wife Laura were instrumental in setting up PEPFAR, which helps save the lives of HIV and AIDS sufferers in Africa

Bush was born on 6 July 1946 in New Haven, Connecticut, the son of Barbara Bush and the future President George HW Bush, who made his fortune in oil. It was a relatively happy childhood albeit tinged with great sadness following the death of his younger sister, Pauline, of leukaemia aged just three. Bush was seven at the time and it was an event which dominated and shaped his early years as he battled to come to terms with his grief. A report in the *Washington Post* in 1999 said that Bush repeatedly questioned why no one had told him she had been dying. It was an event which defined him, ensuring his life would be driven by chance and humour.

This was evident during his time reading history at Yale University. He was a member of the privileged Skull and Bones society and he spent more time socialising and drinking than studying. "To the C students, I say, 'You too can be president of the United States,'" he quipped in 2001 at Yale's 300th commencement. Even so, he was - literally - a high flier after graduation: until 1972, he served as an F-102 fighter pilot in the Texas Air National Guard during the Vietnam War. He went on to receive a Master of Business Administration from Harvard Business School in 1975.



43

### GEORGE W BUSH

**Republican, 1946 - present**

**Brief Bio**

George W Bush was the son of another president - George HW Bush, and his earlier life had alternated between forays in politics and business. After becoming governor of Texas, he was elected as the 43rd president, only to bear the brunt of the terrorist atrocities of September 11 in 2001, which went on to define both of the terms he eventually served.



An infant George W Bush is held lovingly by his parents, future president George HW Bush and his wife Barbara circa 1947

# Life in the time of George W Bush

## The War on Terror

September 11 changed everything for the first decade of the 21st century. Al-Qaeda terrorists would strike in Madrid, London and Mumbai, while Iraq and Afghanistan dominated political thinking. There were mass protests against war, rising fears of further attacks and concern over Iran's nuclear ambitions.

## Religious awareness rises

The world became less ignorant of other religions and began to learn and understand more about Islam, in particular. Meanwhile, Pope John Paul II died on 2 April 2005. Two years earlier, he had sent Cardinal Pio Laghi to meet Bush, asking him to reconsider invading Iraq. He wouldn't.

## The rise of Apple

More people began to invest in technology, in part, because of the phoenix-like revival of Apple spearheaded by founder Steve Jobs who had returned to the company in 1997. The iPod was released in 2001 and revolutionised the way that people bought and listened to music and the iPhone in 2007 ushered in the smartphone era.

## Slower air travel

Concorde was retired in 2003 following its only crash in 2000. It was also a victim of the terrorist attacks of September 11 which had caused a general downturn in air travel numbers, and it heralded the end of supersonic transport and fast travel between the United States and Europe.

## Superheroes dominate Hollywood films

With wars, climate change worries and disasters such as Hurricane Katrina, the world needed superheroes, it seemed. The box office was awash with *X-Men*, *Fantastic Four*, *Iron Man*, *Watchmen*, *Batman* and *Spider-Man* movies, and fantasy films such as *The Lord of the Rings* were also popular.



Bush was only the second president after John Quincy Adams to be the son of a president

His success, experience and responsibilities did not curb his fondness for alcohol, though. In 1976, he was caught drink-driving and arrested. He continued drinking for another ten years, only giving up alcohol in 1986, just two years before he became a paid campaign advisor on his father's successful presidential bid. During that time he had married Laura Welch, joined the United Methodist Church, run a failed campaign for the House of Representatives from Texas' 19th congressional district against Kent Hance, created Arbusto Energy which became Bush Exploration and fathered two children: twin daughters Barbara and Jenna.

In 1994, two years after being campaign advisor for his father's failed re-election campaign, Bush won governorship of Texas and served two terms. It led to him becoming the Republican presidential nominee for the 2000 elections. This had put him up against Al Gore, vice president of the United States under President Bill Clinton.

The election was mired in controversy as scores of voters said they had accidentally voted for the wrong candidate because the ballot was not entirely clear. A recount was triggered in Florida where Bush's victory of margin was just 537. Disappointed voters had rows over hand recounts and punch card ballots where so-called 'chads' were hanging from the papers and were not registering votes. In the end, Bush was declared the winner even though Gore had won the popular vote by 48.4 per cent to Bush's 47.9 per cent.

When Bush was seeking election, he had promised to overhaul Medicare, Social Security and public education. He wanted to put to bed the Clinton-esque scandals of the last office and he rode a wave of principled policies. Newspapers spoke of his desire to cut taxes and help the poor with health insurance tax credits. He wanted investment in the military too.

In his first term Bush achieved tax cuts, and he made strides in the education sector but on September 11 everything would change. Bush's priorities needed to shift in line with the expectations he laid out on the evening of that day.

Having been fully briefed on the terrorist attacks and their likely motivation, Bush's attention fixed on foreign rather than domestic policy. Analysts believed the United States could become an isolationist country but instead the US went all-out, seeking retribution. "The search is underway for those who were behind these evil acts," he told the nation as Osama Bin Laden quickly became identified as the enemy's leader and targets started to be identified.

Bush had, after all, said that "we will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbour them" and so the army and air force were sent to bombard Afghanistan and drive out the ruling Taliban. In 2003, attention switched to Saddam Hussein, the president of Iraq and a man who Bush's father had fought in the Gulf War between 2 August 1990 and 28 February 1991. Hussein



## Defining moment

### Bush graduates from Yale University 1968

Bush arrives at Yale in 1964, at the same time his father is in the running for the Texas United States Senate election against Democrat Ralph Yarborough. He studies history but it is not known what his grades were, quite possibly because he was not viewed as an exceptional student, rather someone who liked to drink, party and have fun. On one occasion he is arrested for disorderly conduct for taking a Christmas wreath from a shop door but the charges are dropped. On 1 January 1967, a notice in the Houston Chronicle says Bush is engaged to Cathryn Lee Wolfman. The wedding is later called off.

## Defining moment

### Bush elected governor of Texas 1994

Bush defeats the popular incumbent Ann Richards and governs Texas for five years, having won a second term in 1998 - the first Texas governor to have done so. He proves to be popular, winning 68.6 per cent of the vote the second time around. Bush is improves public schools, cuts taxes and encourages growth in business, but there is condemnation from human rights activists throughout his time in charge. By the time he leaves office, he has presided over 152 executions - more than any other governor in the state's history at that time.



## Timeline

1946

- **George W Bush is born**
  Bush is born in New Haven, Connecticut and is the first child of Barbara and George HW Bush. His parents would later give him three younger brothers - Jeb, Neil and Marvin - and two sisters - Dorothy and Robin.
  **6 July 1946**
- **The Bush family relocate to West Texas**
  Bush's father decides to move the family to West Texas in order to pursue a new career in the oil industry. This is where the young Bush grows up, later attending The Kinkaid School in Houston.
  **1948**
- **Death of his sister**
  Just a few weeks after the birth of Barbara Bush's second son, Jeb, daughter Pauline Robinson Bush - nicknamed Robin - is diagnosed with leukaemia and dies six months later. The young George is understandably devastated.
  **11 October 1953**
- **Bush marries Laura Welch in Texas**
  Less than a year after meeting, Bush, who is now 31, marries Laura Welch, aged 33, at the First United Methodist Church in Midland, Texas. They go on to have twin daughters called Barbara and Jenna.
  **5 November 1977**
- **Bush enters politics**
  Bush runs for the House of Representatives from Texas' 19th congressional district but loses. He decides to pursue a business career in oil and becomes highly successful. He also buys the Texas Rangers.
  **1978**
- **Bush wins the presidential election**
  After one of the most controversial elections ever, Bush becomes the 43rd president of the United States and he resigns as governor of Texas. He is inaugurated on 20 January 2001.
  **2000**

## "Bush's slow response to Katrina rankled with the American people"

was identified as supporting terrorist groups and he was captured in December 2003.

Key to Bush's efforts to remove Hussein from power and cause change in Iraq was a litany of supposed evidence that Iraq was actively pursuing nuclear weapons. He was claimed to have a stash of chemicals earmarked for warfare and was said to be a threat to world peace. The words 'weapons of mass destruction', or WMD, became widely used but searches in Iraq found nothing at the time of invasion and no caches have ever been discovered since. The whole affair was ultimately highly embarrassing and controversial.

Bush was accused of misleading the American people, an allegation he has strenuously denied. He also risked becoming tarnished by a war that seemingly had no end point in sight. Some sections of the US and the press often held him to ridicule and he was the victim of hoaxes falsely claiming him to have the lowest IQ of any US president over the preceding 50 years. 'Bushisms' became a term given to his frequent verbal slip-ups. "Our enemies are innovative and resourceful, and so are we," he said in August 2004. "They never stop thinking about new ways to harm our country and our people, and neither do we." That year, though, he ran for re-election and won, defeating the Democratic Party's challenger, John Kerry with 50.7 per cent of the popular vote and a margin of 286 to 252 electoral votes.

Certain policies - while controversial around the world - did not seem to affect him. Bush's administration had approved the Guantanamo Bay detention camp in 2002 which held 779 men and boys in harsh conditions. At that time, Bush had the highest approval rating of any president during a mid-term congressional since Dwight D Eisenhower. His second term saw his popularity dip, though. His standing deteriorated in 2005 when Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf Coast in the summer, killing more than 1,000 people and causing $100 billion of damage.

Bush was on vacation in the 1,600-acre Prairie Chapel Ranch in Crawford, Texas, and he did not immediately cut it short. Bush's slow response to Katrina rankled with the American people as news reports continued to show the extreme devastation. Even when he did end his holiday two days earlier than intended, he did not visit the area straight away. It was widely seen as the event which caused the United States to lose confidence in him. His approval rating dropped to 40 per cent in 2006.

By 2008 it had dropped further, to an astonishing 22 per cent according to one poll. By this time the United States was suffering a financial crisis that was also engulfing the world. The Economic Stimulus Act of 2008 sought to stimulate the economy but the global recession was in full force. Amid growing discontentment, Bush had come to the end of his second term but there was no appetite for four more years of Republican policies. It paved the way for a Democratic Party victory as Barack Obama defeated John McCain to spark a new era in American history.

### *Defining moment*

### Terrorists strike the United States 11 September 2001

No timeline of George W Bush could be complete without mention of September 11 since it would go on to define his entire presidency and overshadow everything else he achieved. Bush is informed of the multiple terrorist attacks on US soil while he is reading *The Pet Goat* to children at the Emma E Booker School in Sarasota, Florida. He gives a short press conference at 9.30am that morning before he is moved to a secure location on board Air Force One. He returns to the White House and begins work on a more long-term response.







Bush oversaw the construction of a brand new stadium in Arlington

## Bush the sports fan

Bush was a keen sportsman and he played rugby union during his high school and Yale years. Having learned in 1988 that the Texas Rangers were being put up for sale, he headed a group the following April which invested $89 million and took a controlling stake in the franchise.

Under Bush's watch - and in conjunction with the city of Arlington - a new stadium was built for the team costing $193 million. It was financed through a half-cent sales tax increase for Arlington residents. The move boosted attendances, pushing them beyond two million for the first time in franchise history.

Bush continued to buy more shares and he eventually took his personal financial investment to $606,302. But attorney Glenn Sodd sued the Rangers on behalf of two families whose property had been seized for stadium parking space. They argued that they had received only a fraction of its value.

The new Ballpark eventually opened in 1994 and achieved average crowds of 40,374 but when Bush was elected governor, he decided to step down as managing general partner. In 1998, the franchise was eventually sold to Tom Hicks for $250 million, a sum which netted Bush a cool $14.9 million. Bush remains a huge fan of the Texas Rangers and he is often seen at the games.

**Education reform introduced**
Bush pushed through the No Child Left Behind Act which introduced the standardised testing of children to close the achievement gap between the advantaged and disadvantaged.
**2002**

**A busy year**
As well as declaring war on Iraq - ensuring that it joined Afghanistan in being part of the War on Terror, Bush brings in laws encouraging business growth, better health systems and he also signs the HIV/AIDS act.
**2003**

**Bush is inaugurated again**
Having beaten senator John F Kerry in the presidential race of 2004, Bush assumes a second term, but the destruction in New Orleans brought about by Hurricane Katrina severely dents his popularity ratings and leaves him with a public relations mountain to climb.
**2005**

**Sealing the borders**
The Secure Fence Act of 2006 was signed in a bid to halt the rise of illegal entry, drug trafficking and security threats in the United States. A fence 700 miles long was built on the Mexico-US border to boost security.
**26 October 2006**

**More activity in Iraq**
Further US troops are committed to Iraq in order to secure Baghdad and the adjascent Al Anbar province. Former Iraq president Saddam Hussein was finally executed by the United States the year before.
**2007**

2008

**Second term ends**
Bush draws his second term of office to a close and Democrat Barack Obama is elected the 44th president of the United States. Bush publishes his memoirs in 2010 and he becomes a grandparent for the first time in 2013.
**26 October 2008**






## 2009 – 2017

# Barack Obama

Barack Obama's inauguration generated unprecedented excitement and clamour. He largely delivered on his promises to restore the country's shattered reputation abroad and resurrect it from the doldrums of the Great Recession

On 20 January 2009, downtown Washington DC was swamped with millions of supporters, generating the largest inauguration crowds since Lyndon Johnson's re-election in 1965. The man they had come to see: President Barack Obama. Elected to the nation's highest office at the tender age of 47, his only political experience consisting of one term in the Senate, Obama was a sensation.

Obama's upbringing was atypical, yet emblematic of the American dream that came to underscore his political story. Born in Honolulu to a mother from Kansas and a father from Kenya, he lived in Indonesia and Hawaii, splitting time between his mother and grandparents. He was unsettled as a teen, and admitted to smoking marijuana and experimenting with cocaine to fit in. He was rigorously home-schooled for much of his childhood by his mother, and he credited this occasionally stern upbringing with instilling in him the values that would allow him to succeed. He gained national attention in 1991 when he was elected the first black president of the Harvard Law Review. He also began writing a book on race relations that would become his bestselling memoir, *Dreams From My Father*. Obama began teaching at the University of Chicago Law School, lecturing on constitutional law, and working as a community organiser. During his political career, he would often return to the measured, patient tones that he honed teaching law.

Later political opponents mocked Obama's days as a community organiser and point to his associations with unsavoury characters that he cultivated, but his work with black churches in Chicago helped bolster his image as a man of the people, rather than an elite and disconnected Ivy League scholar.

During his candidacy for the Illinois Senate, Obama gained notoriety with his bitter opposition to Bush's invasion of Iraq. At the 2004 Democratic National Convention, he electrified his party with the keynote speech, rising from obscurity to a genuine party leader. Despite a fruitful first term as Senator, Obama was a political neophyte, so few expected him to pose a serious challenge to Hillary Clinton in the lead up to the 2008 presidential election. However, Obama's accessible, tech-savvy campaign harnessed an engaged new cadre of young voters and small fundraisers. He was an excellent orator, charismatic, and rode a wave of adulation and excitement to the White House, defeating John McCain in a landslide victory.

The country was in a bad state, suffering from the wounds inflicted by a runaway Wall Street, and dealing with the worst recession since the Great Depression. Obama embraced a radical spending plan, rejecting the austerity that many European nations opted for. His stimulus plan was his most lasting and resounding success, as the country recovered quickly from the recession and unemployment decreased steadily over his two terms.

When Obama was inaugurated, the US was also embroiled in two unpopular wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. He had promised to end both wars, and when he was re-elected in 2012, he campaigned on his successes in the Middle East, having ostensibly ended the Iraq War in 2011. However, as tensions boiled over in Syria and Iraq, Obama sent troops back in – and he never did withdraw troops from Afghanistan altogether.

His presidency was characterised throughout by battles with a stubborn Congress – the Democrats had a majority in both Houses in his first term, but that didn't last. He failed to follow through on his campaign pledge to close the notorious Guantanamo Bay detention facility when Congress refused to cooperate, but supporters will wonder if he could have done more. His lingering achievement was his Affordable Care Act, dubbed ObamaCare, which, although neutered somewhat in Congress, was a genuine and lasting effort to make basic healthcare available to all Americans. His efforts at working with Republicans on landmark legislation foundered, and he repeatedly faced the threat of government shutdowns from an increasingly fractious Republican House critical of his excessive spending. In the wake of the Sandy Hook school shooting, Obama reiterated his desire to pass gun-control legislation, but was again thwarted.

Obama will be remembered for his deep commitment to progressive ideals. He repealed the 'Don't ask, don't tell' policy, allowing openly gay men and women to serve in the military. And in 2015, a Supreme Court featuring two of his appointed justices made same-sex marriage federally legal. He considered himself an arbitrator of racial disputes, and often intervened in police matters (notably issuing statements on the killings of Michael Brown and Trayvon Martin), yet towards the end of his second term it became clear that racial tensions in the US were worse than ever before.

Obama's two terms featured notable foreign policy successes, the highlights being the rapprochement with Cuba, the killing of Osama Bin Laden, and the successful negotiations with Iran over its nuclear program. However, those were overshadowed by his failure to deal with ISIS, his sluggish action in Syria, an inability to control the security environment in Iraq, a bombing campaign in Libya that left it a failed state, frosty relations with Israel, the debacle in Benghazi, backtracking on a warning to Bashar al-Assad over chemical weapons use, and repeated humiliation at the hands of Vladimir Putin and Russia.

Critics will find similarities in the foreign policy of Obama and his predecessor, as he continued Bush's extra-judicial drone strikes in dozens of countries, and stepped up a mass surveillance plan through the National Security Agency. Obama swept in on a platform of hope, and to his credit delivered on many domestic items, salvaged the economy, and did much to restore the United States' reputation abroad, yet he failed to realise many of his promises and was widely seen as indecisive when it mattered most.

Obama worked in Baskin Robbins as a teenager and as a result can't stand ice cream

## The Affordable Care Act

Obama's most lasting achievement was healthcare reform, which he pushed through in 2010 with the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Acts. Despite serious opposition from the right-wing Tea Party movement and virtually every Republican in Congress, the act carried and was reaffirmed by the Supreme Court in 2012. Despite a slow roll-out of government-sponsored healthcare plans, and subsequent opposition by state governors, the Act has made affordable healthcare available to working-class Americans, and granted the consumer protection from predatory insurance company practices.





Obama won a Grammy in 2006 for the audiobook reading of his memoir

## Life in the time of Barack Obama

### The Great Recession

A sub-prime mortgage crisis, a shady default swaps market, and the bundling of exotic financial instruments combined with deregulation of Wall Street in the 1990s and 2000s led to a total collapse of the financial system and the housing market in 2007. Obama creditably resurrected the car industry, regulated the banks, and restored the economy over his two terms.

### The Iraq War 'ends'

In early 2009, Obama announced that he would end the Iraq War within 18 months. The US public was upset with the fraudulent entry into the war and the subsequent failure of nation-building. Obama kept his word. However, when the Islamic State shrugged off the American-trained and American-supported Iraqi army, captured Mosul and carried out ethnic cleansing campaigns in 2014, thousands of US troops re-entered Iraq.

### Osama meets his watery grave

In May 2011, CIA intelligence revealed that Osama Bin Laden was living in Abbottabad, Pakistan. Obama rejected a plan to bomb the compound, opting instead for a raid by Navy Seals. The raid was successful, and Bin Laden was shot and buried at sea. Though he was no longer actively involved in Al-Qaeda, the raid was considered a strategic and moral victory for the US and bolstered Obama's popularity.

### Spying among friends

When Edward Snowden revealed the NSA's overreach in collecting data, the US faced a stern backlash abroad. German Chancellor Angela Merkel was particularly enraged that US intelligence was listening to her mobile phone calls. The NSA agreed to stop the overeager collection of data but Obama's popularity dipped.

### A thin red line

When Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad used sarin gas, a chemical weapon outlawed by the Geneva Convention, to murder thousands of innocent civilians in Damascus, Obama faced a conundrum. He had called the use of such weapons a red line not to be crossed, at the threat of immediate military reprisal. Yet Obama backed down from his threat and Putin mediated the situation instead, humiliating him.

## 2017 – present

# Donald Trump

### Trump's shock election win split opinion not only in the US but across the world. It is shaping up to be one of the most controversial presidencies yet

Like Barack Obama, Donald Trump's inauguration in Washington was attended by many, many people. "I looked over that sea of people and I said to myself, 'wow'," Trump would later tell ABC News. "That was some crowd." Yet unlike his predecessor's passage to the White House, Trump's claim to have the largest presidential inauguration audience in history was immediately called into question. Images emerged of large empty spaces. But Trump's presidency - a man who had no prior political experience - was always going to be controversial.

Trump announced his presidential bid on 16 June 2015 following months of speculation. Seeking the Republican presidential nomination, he declared the United States needed somebody who could "make it great again", but with a dozen major candidates also in the running, few believed that he would actually succeed. Trump, however, was confident from the outset and he vowed to use his own money to fund his campaign. As a billionaire real-estate developer with interests in hotels, golf courses and casinos, he certainly had enough cash.

Trump's father was the self-made real estate tycoon Fred Trump, who had helped pioneer the concept of supermarkets during the Great Depression of the mid-1930s. When Trump was found misbehaving at school, he was sent to the New York Military Academy but, in 1966, he entered the business school of the University of Pennsylvania to study economics, graduating in 1968. Although he had worked for the family firm, Elizabeth Trump and Son, during university, his father handed him a "small" million-dollar loan which allowed him to start his own real estate venture. He later joined the company full time and took control. He renamed it the Trump Organization in 1971.

During that decade and the 1980s, Trump cemented his reputation as an all-American businessman. In 1976, a glowing profile about him in *The New York Times* reported that he was worth $200 million aged 30. But although he sought to shape Manhattan, renovating properties in the borough and altering the skyline (most notably with the erection of Trump Tower on Fifth Avenue, which was completed in 1983), there was a sense it was the elite's approval that he sought most. "I think he came to Manhattan and he really set his sights on making it in Manhattan," the newspaper's current executive editor Dean Baquet said in March 2017.

> Donald Trump has been embroiled in a war of words with the press, in particular the "failing" *New York Times*

Since then, Trump has led a colourful life. Although his businesses have suffered four bankruptcy filings over the years, he has written 19 books (a mix of self-help, business guides and co-written fiction), taken a large stake in the beauty pageants Miss Universe, Miss USA and Miss Teen USA, had a starring role in the reality television show *The Apprentice* and even found time for a cameo in *Home Alone 2*. It's certainly fair to say that he's a driven man in his pursuit of success.



**45**

**DONALD TRUMP**
**Republican, 1946 – present**

**Brief Bio**

Born in the New York City borough of Queens to wealthy parents, Donald Trump made history by becoming the first US president to have no political or military experience. Elected on a promise to "drain the swamp" of Washington, Trump is seen as a highly experienced and successful businessman who also starred in the reality TV show, *The Apprentice*.



Donald Trump's Cabinet as of March 2017. Some, though most certainly not all, of his selections have been controversial

# Trump's cabinet picks

## Mike Pompeo
### Secretary of State
Having worked as the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency since January 2017, Pompeo was chosen by Trump to succeed Rex Tillerson because of his experience as an ex-spymaster. He is also a member of the notorious "Tea Party" faction of Republicans.

## General James "Jim" Mattis
### Secretary of Defense
Nicknamed 'Mad Dog', Mattis is a four-star Marine Corps general who spent four decades on the frontline. He led an assault battalion during the 1991 Gulf War and he commanded troops in Afghanistan and Iraq in the early 2000s. He has even been known to disagree with Trump on many occasions.

## Jeff Sessions
### Attorney General
Having served in the US Senate since 1997 and held public office in Alabama since 1981, Sessions is a hugely experienced politician. He has declined to take part in investigations into Donald Trump's campaign, which Trump has criticised as "very unfair to the president," opening an astonishing public rift. He takes a hard line on issues ranging from medical marijuana to illegal immigration.

## Alex Azar
### Secretary of Health and Human Services
Price is a Lawyer and former drug company executive from Pennsylvania. He previously worked as doctor of ophthalmology for more than 30 years. He is tasked with overhauling the US healthcare system and he wants to rein in the growth of Medicare and Medicaid. He has also supported moves to curb abortion.

## Betsy DeVos
### Secretary of Education
Protests greeted the selection of Betsy DeVos to the cabinet. Confirmed by a tie-breaking vote from vice-president Mike Pence, she has said guns should be allowed in schools threatened by bears, or in her words "potential grizzlies". She supports expanding charter schools and school vouchers.

# "Since Trump took office, US foreign policy has seen a dramatic change"

## Time on the golf course

Although Donald Trump repeatedly called Barack Obama out for taking time away to play golf, his own fixation with the sport saw him spend seven of his first 14 weekends as president at Mar-a-Lago, his golf club in Florida. Indeed, as of July 2017 he had spent more than 20 per cent of his time as president at one of his golf clubs and he had even taken to calling Mar-a-Lago the "Southern White House". At least four of his clubs have a framed copy of a *Time* magazine cover hung on the wall. Bearing his image and the headline "Donald Trump: The Apprentice is a television smash!", it was then revealed to be fake.

The Trump Organization operates 18 golf courses across the world, raking in hundreds of millions of dollars each year. The most controversial is in Balmedie, Scotland where opponents say it impacts on a site of special scientific interest. An unflattering documentary aired on BBC 2 called *You've Been Trumped*, which highlighted those fighting against the development. As for how good he is as a player, he told golfdigest.com that he was self-taught and trusted his instinct. The reporter said his "swing was imperfect but grooved".




Trump International Golf Links in Balmedie, Scotland is a championship course and viewed as one of the best in the world

In the race for the White House, Clinton, as expected, took the Democratic nomination, and Trump led a side-campaign to have her prosecuted for using her private email server while she was Secretary of State. During presidential debates, Clinton accused Trump of tax avoidance, sexism and racism. Then in October, a tape emerged in which Trump's candid views of women were caught and there were accusations that he had inappropriately touched four women. But Trump trusted his instincts and he was bolstered by the mass attendances at his rallies. So while the world was shocked when, on 9 November 2016, Trump was elected the 45th president of the United States, it came as little surprise to him. He was inaugurated on 20 January 2017.

Almost immediately, Trump got down to business, signing numerous executive actions aimed at dismantling Obama's regulations. He withdrew the US from the TPP, banned funding for international groups that provide abortions and he placed a freeze on the hiring of non-military federal workers. On each occasion, he was filmed putting pen to paper in the Oval Office, later congratulating himself on Twitter. Indeed, his heavy use of social media has continued. He uses both his own and the official US President account (@POTUS) to give his opinion on home and world affairs, and also to flag up when he thinks he is not getting enough credit for something. He ended up signing 90 executive actions in his first 100 days.

> One of Trump's most pressing matters has been the ongoing issue of North Korea, which he has vowed to solve

One executive order in particular has proved controversial: the attempt to ban visitors from seven Muslim-majority countries. It was taken to court and defeated following confusion and protests, frustrating Trump who tried and failed to implement it a second time. But in June 2018 - on Trump's third attempt - the Supreme Court passed a revised version. Nationals from Yemen, Iran, Libya, Syria and Somalia - as well as North Koreans and Venezuelan government officials - are prevented from entering the US, unless they meet strict conditions. The policy has been deemed Islamophobic, and closes the door for refugees fleeing war-torn nations. Its passage in the Supreme Court was closely contested, with only 5-4 in favour.

Jobs and the environment have figured highly in Trump's presidency so far. On the one hand, CNNMoney's Trump Jobs Tracker gave the president credit for the addition of 317,000 jobs in February and March. On the other, his announcement that the US would pull out of the Paris climate accord was seen as a setback in the efforts to combat global warming. Yet Trump was applauded for his action in the Syrian war. When president Bashar Al-Assad of Syria used chemical weapons in April, America's military hit out, firing 59 Tomahawk cruise missiles at the air base used to launch the attack.



### *Defining moment*
### James B Comey is fired
### 9 May 2017

On 10 January 2017, it emerged a dossier had been written by a former British MI6 intelligence officer, Christopher Steele, alleging secret contacts between the Russian government and Trump during the presidential election. The matter has rumbled on since, with Michael Flynn, who Trump appointed national security advisor, quitting on 13 February over his links to Russia, and FBI director James B Comey later confirming the bureau was investigating Russia's alleged interference in the US election. On 9 May, Trump sacks Comey, saying he hadn't effectively handled the investigation into Hillary Clinton's use of a private email server but later admits "this Russia thing" had played a part.

## *The early reign*

2017

**Donald Trump's inauguration**
Donald Trump takes the presidential oath at the Capitol and tells his audience the day will be remembered "as the day the people became the rulers of this nation again".
**20 January 2017**

**Attempts a Muslim ban**
He signs an executive order which prohibits travel from seven Muslim-majority countries to the United States for 90 days, prompting protests. It is blocked within days by a federal judge.
**27 January 2017**

**North Korea fires missile**
North Korea test-fires a ballistic missile, which hands Trump his first international crisis. Widely viewed as being a "show of force" by Pyongyang, the missile safely lands in the Sea of Japan.
**12 February 2017**

**Tries to ban Muslims again**
Having had his appeal overturned in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, Trump signs a new executive order removing Iran, but banning people from six Muslim-majority countries.
**6 March 2017**

**US strikes Syrian targets**
Trump takes action against Syrian targets after the country's president, Bashar Al-Assad, uses chemical weapons against civilians, including children. He says it was in the "vital national security interest" of the US.
**7 April 2017**

**Putin offers to help**
Reports that Trump had divulged classified information to a Russian minister and envoy is denied by President Vladimir Putin, who offers to release a record of the meeting.
**17 May 2017**



Donald Trump speaking at an election rally in Arizona wearing a cap that bears his campaign slogan, Make America Great Again

© Gage Skidmore

Since Trump took office, America's foreign policy has seen a dramatic change. In Israel, for example, the President caused international outcry by recognising Jerusalem (a contested zone between Israel and Palestine) as the Israeli capital, and promised to move the US embassy there. The US has also withdrawn from many key international agreements, such as the UN Human Rights Council, which it did in protest to its frequent criticism of Israeli treatment of Palestinians.

Another break from his predecessors is his conduct on the North Korean issue. It seemed as if the US and North Korea were about to go head-to-head in nuclear war. In August 2017, Trump and Kim Jong-un were at each other's throats, Trump calling Kim a "rocket man", with Kim firing back that Trump was a "dotard". But in a surprise cooling of tensions, the two leaders met at a summit in Singapore in June 2018. The two nations stated they should work together to create "a lasting and stable peace regime on the Korean peninsula", and that North Korea was looking to denuclearize.

His supporters would argue he has had other triumphs, too. The stock market has reached record highs and illegal border crossings have fallen. But Trump's lack of political experience has often shown. His language can be blunt and critics are quick to seize on his blunders no matter how small (right down to his ham-fisted typing of "coverage" as "covfefe" on Twitter). Even Trump's assertive handshakes, in which he appears to pull people towards him in an almost-aggressive manner, are put under the spotlight.

Trump's domestic policy has also been heavily criticised. As well as dismantling the Medicare system, which was a step on the path to providing Americans with universal health care, Trump has been instrumental in restricting abortions to women across the country. Although he has struggled to maintain a clear position on the specifics, he is staunchly against abortion. He signed an order to stop providing funding to international groups that either perform, or provide information on, abortions. He also stated his commitment to overturning the landmark case Roe v. Wade, which affirmed a woman's right to abortion in the US.

As gun violence and mass shootings in America become more commonplace, the President's lack of action has led to widespread criticism and pleas for him to take a stand. Many politicians from across the political spectrum, as well as ordinary people, are crying out for gun control. 223 mass shootings took place in the US between January and August 2018 alone. The Las Vegas concert shooting in 2017 was the deadliest shooting in US history, taking almost 60 lives in just a few minutes. Though he offered his condolences, he refused to condemn the act as domestic terrorism, and when asked about gun control said, "We aren't going to talk about that today". The Valentine's Day 2018 school shooting in Parkland, Florida killed 17 teenagers and school staff. Trump, whose campaign received significant donations from the National Rifle Association, has shown that he largely opposes restricting the Second Amendment.

> Lots of licensed products have used his name, from vodka and steaks, to furniture and board games

Trump has never been one to shy away from racial controversy. His persistent questioning of Barack Obama's true birthplace led to him being labelled a racist, and many of his statements on Latinos and African-Americans have strengthened the case. Aside from calling all Mexicans "murderers and rapists", he criticised athletes who chose to 'take a knee' during the national anthem protesting racially motivated police brutality, and called white supremacists who murdered a woman at a rally in Charlottesville, Virginia "very fine people".

But then Trump is the most controversial of US presidents. While Obama was swept in on a platform of hope, Trump was inaugurated on a platform of fear. He continues to hit the headlines, all too often for the wrong reason. Perhaps this is why, at the time of writing, his average approval rating had dropped to 39 per cent, down from 42 per cent at the 100-day mark of his presidency. Only time will tell how he comes to be viewed at the time of the next election in 2020.

## *Defining moment*
### Embarks on foreign trips
**19 May 2017**

In the wake of his election to the presidency, Trump spoke to many world leaders by phone and met some in person. The first British politician to have shaken his hand was the former leader of the United Kingdom Independence Party, Nigel Farage, shortly after the election result. He beat Prime Minister Theresa May, who had instead made a phone call on 10 November 2016. Trump's first trip abroad, though, comes in the month of May when he jets off to Saudi Arabia and Israel and attends global summits in Italy and Belgium. The trip lasts nine days.

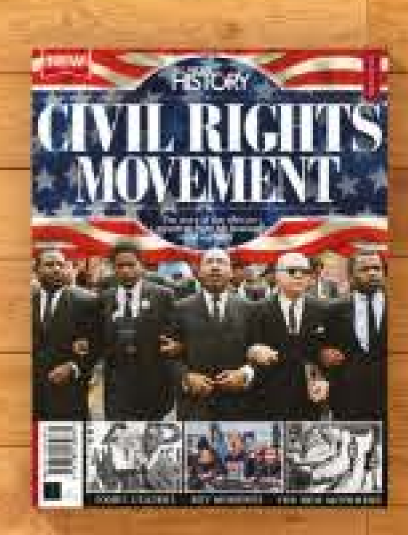
## *Defining moment*
### Homeland Security separates families
**15 June 2018**

In a shocking revelation, the Department of Homeland Security reveals that in April and May, many immigrant families were separated at the southern US border, with nearly 2,000 children being taken away from their parents, who were to be prosecuted for illegal border crossings. Trump said he hated to see children being taken from their families, but blamed the Democrats for causing the problem - though his own 'zero tolerance' policy allowed this treatment to blossom. On June 20, he signed an executive order ending family separation, but many parents have not yet been reunited with their children.




2018

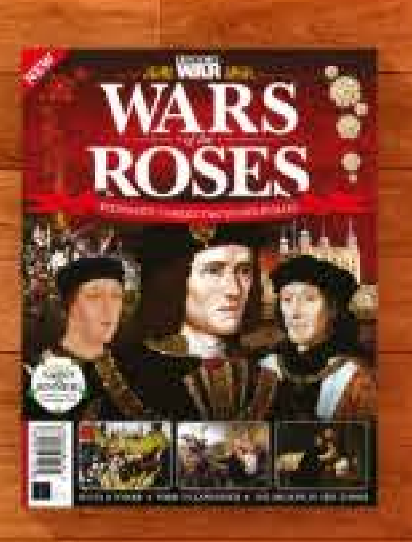
- **Withdraws from Paris agreement** Trump formally announces that the United States will be withdrawing from the Paris climate agreement which had been struck in 2015. The decision is widely condemned by the EU. **1 June 2017**
- **Trump Jr admits Russian link** Donald Trump Jr admits to meeting the Russian lawyer Natalia Veselnitskaya on 9 June 2016 following claims she had damaging information about Hillary Clinton. **19 July 2017**
- **Cancels UK visit** After mass protests, Trump cancels his planned visit to the UK. He claims he was angry with Obama for getting a "bad deal" by moving the US embassy to its new location in Vauxhall. **12 January 2018**
- **Stormy Daniels affair** After the former adult film actress filed a lawsuit, Trump's lawyer admits that Trump paid $130,000 for her silence about their affair - apparently out of his own wealth. **13 February 2018**
- **G7 Summit** Trump attends the G7 summit in Canada. He leaves early, having had a strained conversation with Canadian PM Justin Trudeau, and accused him of 'stabbing him in the back'. **8-9 June 2018**
- **Omarosa Scandal** Before the release of her book, former aide Omarosa Maingault claims Trump used a severe racial slur while filming The Apprentice. In retaliation, Trump calls her a flurry of names, and said he only gave her the aide job out of pity. **12-13 August 2018**

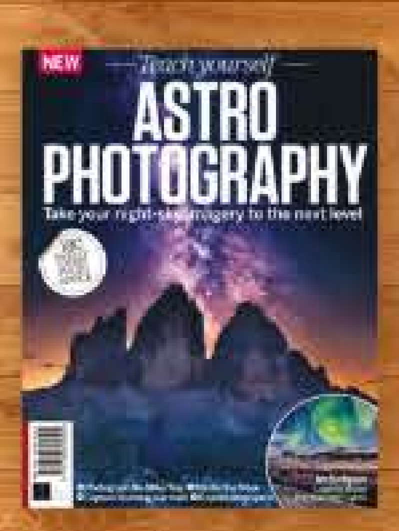






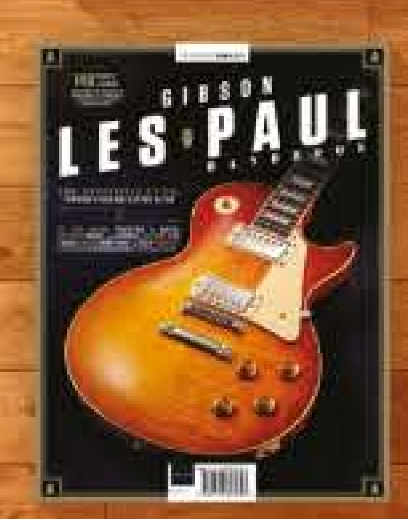








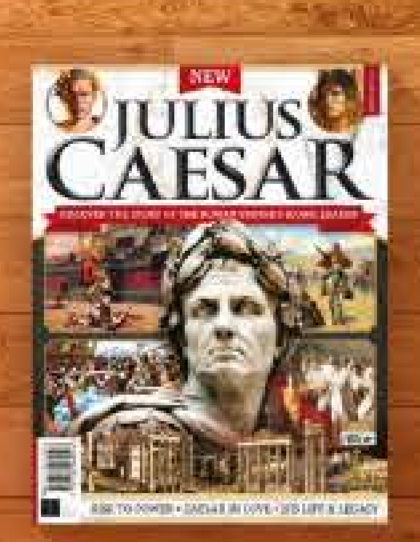


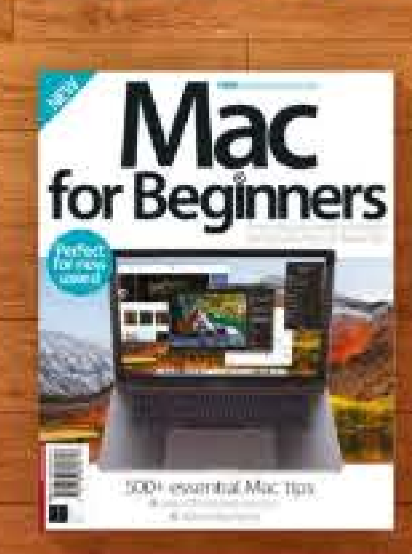





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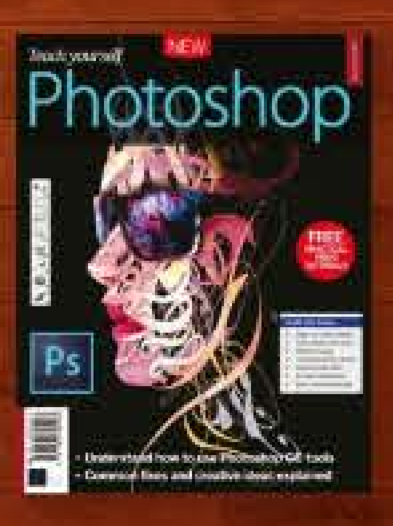
















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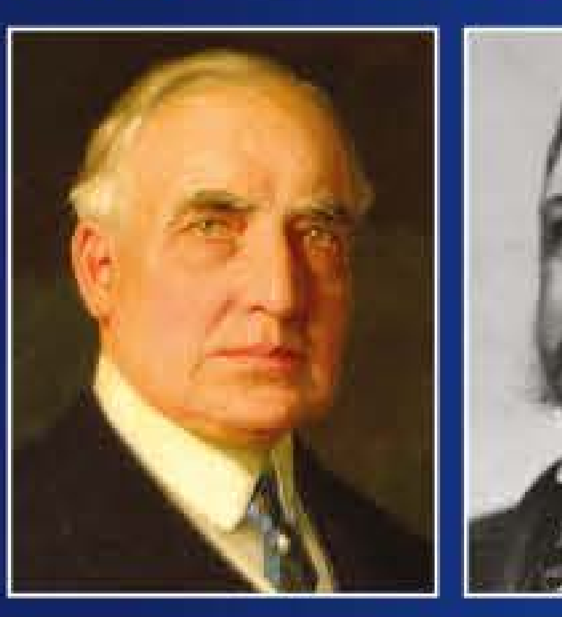
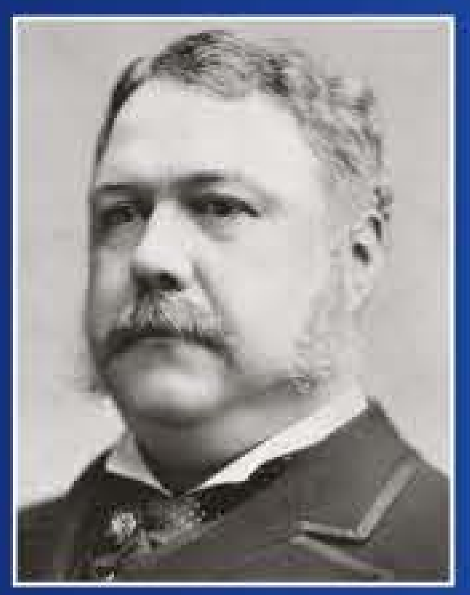

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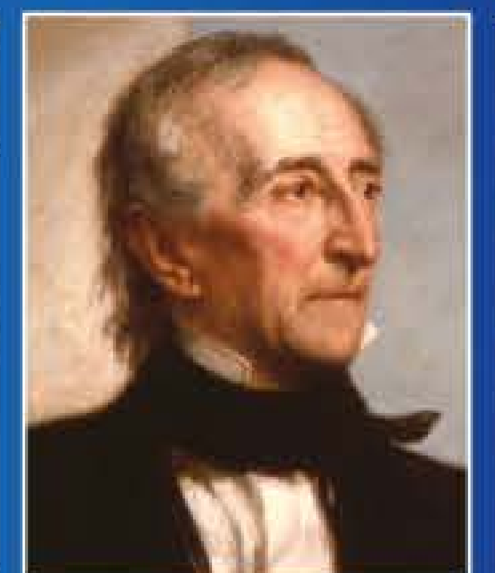
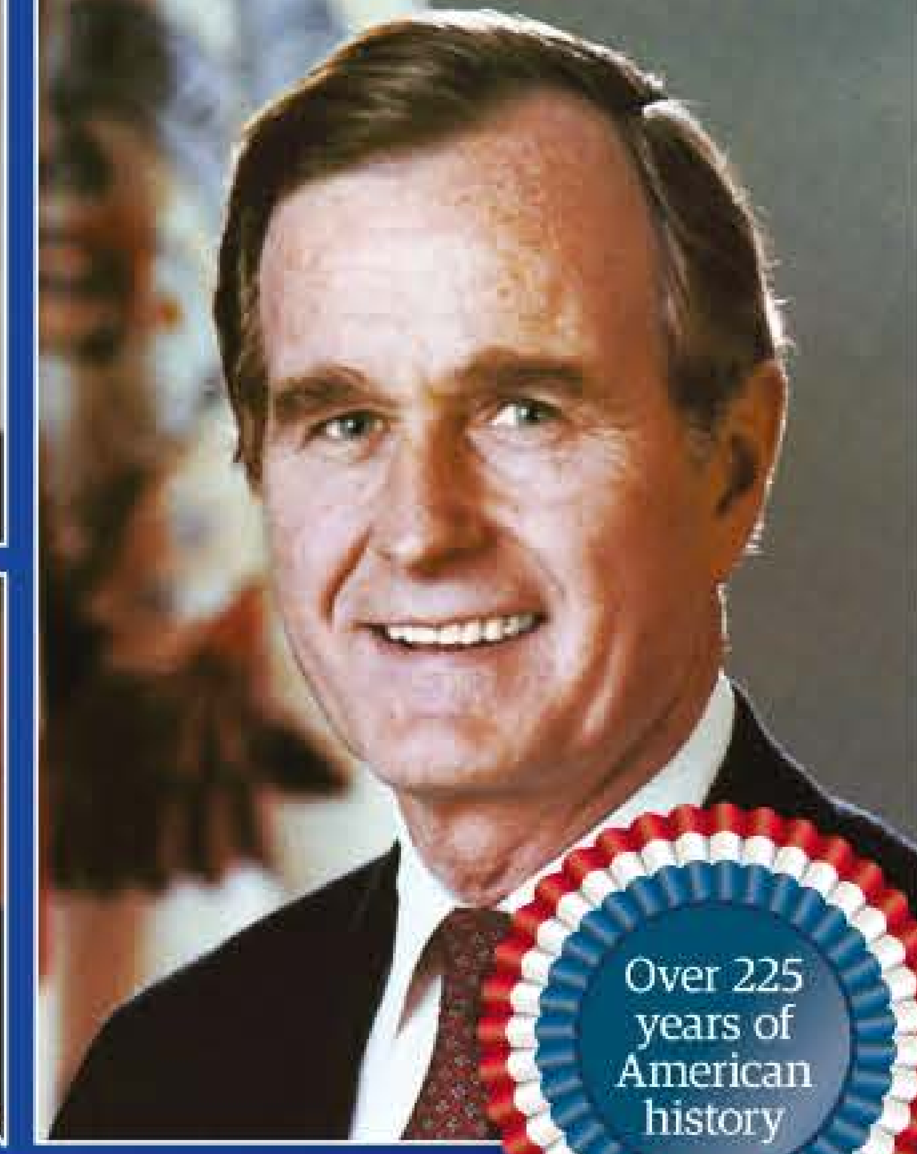
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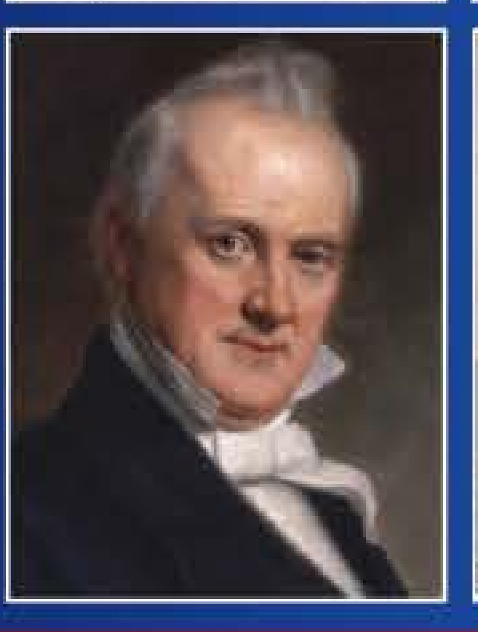
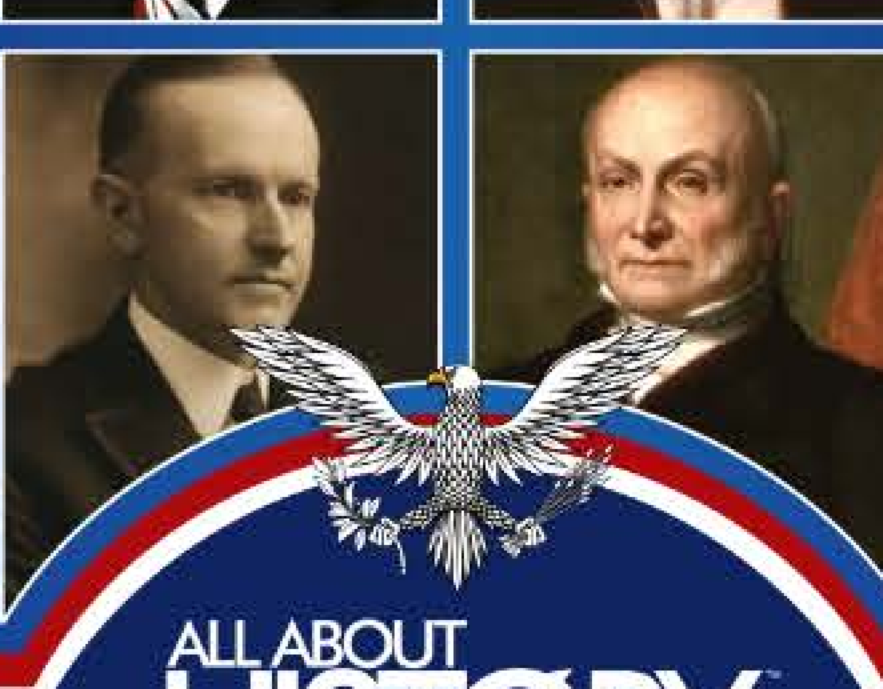
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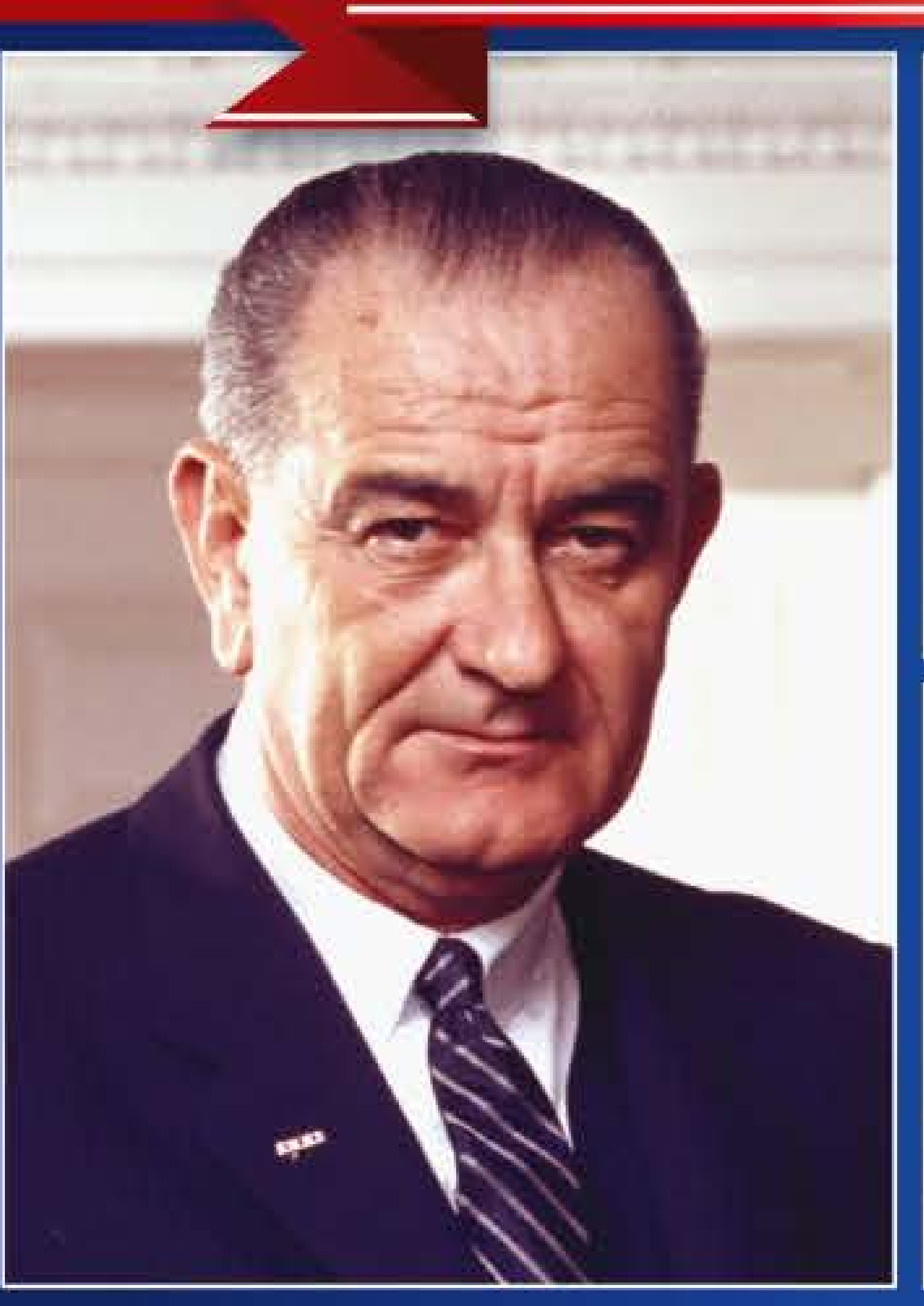
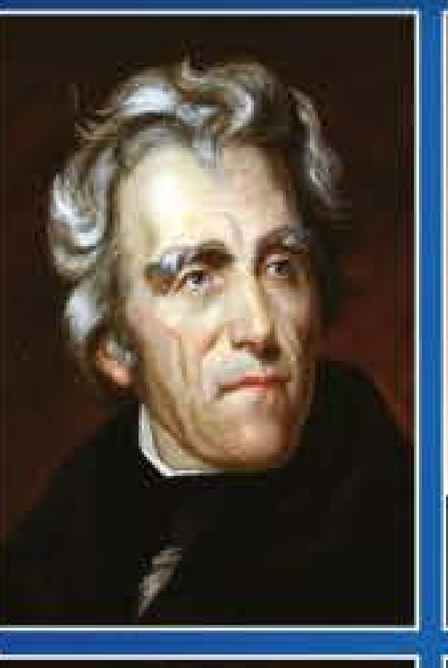
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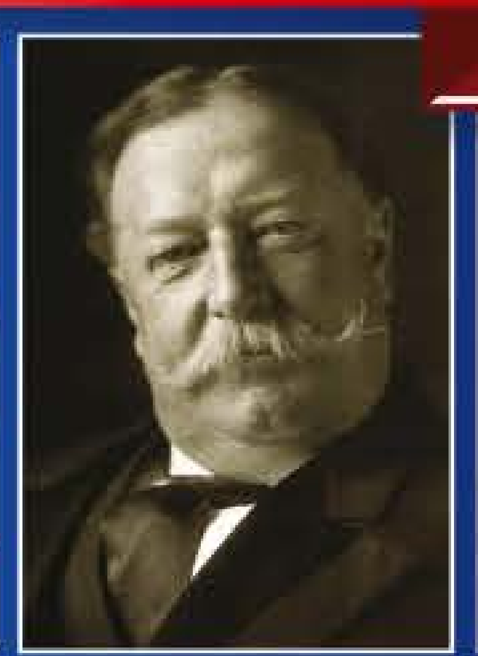
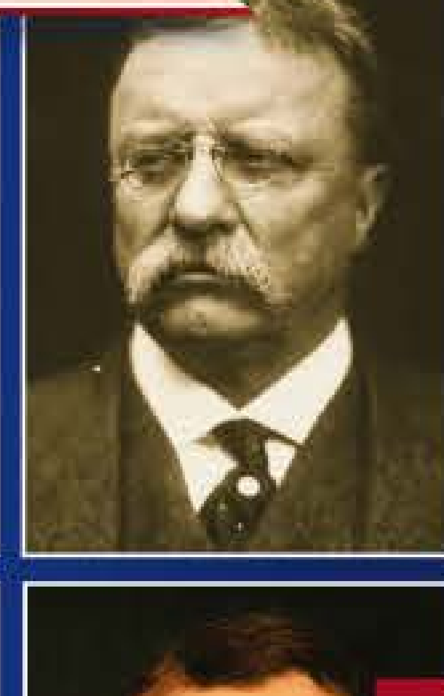
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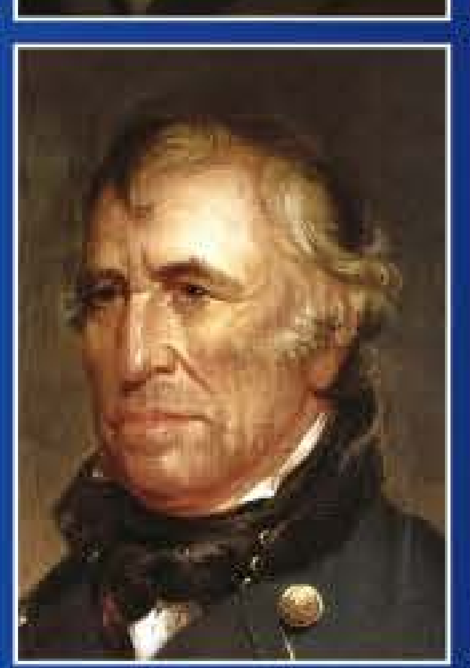
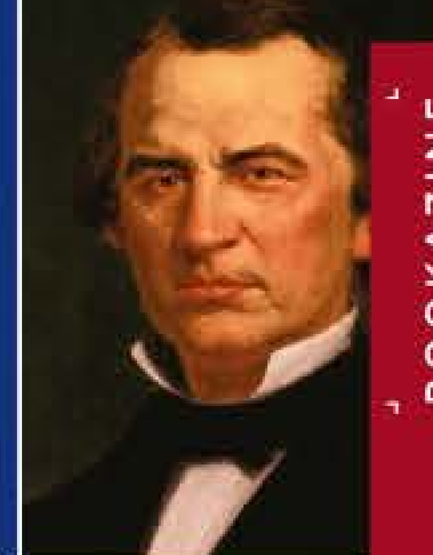
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